INFANTRY PLATOON OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Subcourse Number IN0501

Edition B

UNITED STATES ARMY INFANTRY SCHOOL
FORT BENNING, GEORGIA 31905-5593

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SUBCOURSE OVERVIEW

This subcourse is designed to teach the basic information on the preparation of a platoon operation order for an offensive mission, planning a dismounted daylight attack for an infantry platoon, and identifying the planning considerations for the conduct of a limited visibility attack by an infantry platoon.

There are no prerequisites for this subcourse.

This subcourse reflects the doctrine which was current at the time it was prepared. In your own work situation, always refer to the latest publications.

The words "he", "him", "his", and "men", when used in this publication, represent both the masculine and feminine genders unless otherwise stated.

TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE

ACTION:	Identify the preparation and issue of a platoon operation order for an offensive mission, plan a dismounted day light attack for an infantry platoon, and identify the planning considerations for the conduct of a limited visibility attack by an infantry platoon.
CONDITION:	Given the material contained in this subcourse.
STANDARD:	To demonstrate competency of this subcourse, you must achieve a minimum of 70 percent on the subcourse examination.

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LESSON 1

PREPARE AN OPERATIONS ORDER FOR AN OFFENSIVE MISSION

OVERVIEW

Lesson Description:

In this lesson, you will learn to prepare an operation order.

Terminal Learning Objective:

Action:	Identify the procedures for preparing an infantry platoon offensive operation order.
Condition:	Given the subcourse material contained in this lesson.
Standard:	The student will demonstrate his comprehension and knowledge by identifying the procedures for preparing an infantry platoon offensive operation order.
Reference:	The material contained in this lesson was derived from the following publications:

> FM 7-7J
> FM 7-8
> FM 101-5

INTRODUCTION

Combat orders are written or oral. Leaders use them to transmit information and instructions to their subordinates. The use of combat orders, expressed in standard formats or containing essential elements, ensures that a leader conveys his instructions clearly, concisely, and completely. The detail of an order varies with the time a leader has to prepare it. Standing operating procedures (SOPs) complement combat orders and allow the leader to refer to them rather than issue the same instructions for tasks and situations that occur often.

1. **General**. There are generally three kinds of combat orders; warning order, operation order, and fragmentary order. When you are issuing a combat order, you should make sure it contains certain characteristics. A good combat order includes the following:

a. **Clarity**. Each level of command that uses a combat order must understand it thoroughly. Use of highly technical language can cause misinterpretation. Use of accepted doctrinally established military terminology and phraseology conveys identical meanings to all commands.

b. **Completeness**. The order must contain all the information and instructions necessary to coordinate and to execute the operation. However, the order prescribes only those details or methods of execution necessary to ensure that the actions of the subordinate units concerned conform to the plan of operations for the entire force. The order must convey the purpose or intent of the commander so subordinate commanders will be able to accomplish their mission without further instructions. The completeness of an order also must include sufficient detail so all subordinate commanders know what other units are doing.

c. **Brevity**. Unnecessary detail is avoided. However, clarity and completeness are not sacrificed in the interest of brevity.

d. **Recognition of Subordinate Commanders' Prerogative**. The order should not infringe on the initiative of subordinate commanders by prescribing details of execution. Only under unusual circumstances, such as an operation requiring extremely close cooperation and timing, should a subordinate commander be told precisely how to perform an assigned task.

e. **Use of the Affirmative Form**. In the interest of simplicity and clarity, the affirmative form of expression is used throughout all combat orders. Wording such as "The tanks will not be attached to the (battalion)" is improper for two reasons: first, the intent of the order depends on the word "not"; second, actual disposition of the tanks is not indicated. The proper affirmative form is "Tanks will be attached to Company C".

f. **Avoidance of Qualified Directives**. Such expressions as "attack vigorously" are not only meaningless, but also weaken the force of subsequent directives in which the qualifying adverb does not appear. Such expressions as "try to hold" and "as far as possible" lessen responsibility. Use of a term such as "main attack" is adequate, clear, and does not require further qualification.

g. **Authoritative Expression**. The order must reflect the commander's intention and will. Indecisive, vague, and ambiguous language indicate indecision and leads to uncertainty and lack of confidence by subordinates. The commander tells his subordinates in direct and unmistakable terms exactly what he wants them to do.

h. **Timeliness**. Timely distribution of orders allows subordinate commanders sufficient time for planning and preparation. Concurrent planning saves time.

2. **Types Of Combat Orders**.

a. **Operation Order**. An operation order (OPORD) gives subordinate commanders the essential information needed to carry out an operation. This includes the situation, the mission, the assignment of tasks, and the support and assistance to be provided. When an operation is to be conducted immediately, the complete order (or a series of fragmentary orders (FRAGOs), which are discussed in detail later in this lesson) is prepared based on the commander's announced decision and concept, if given. When an operation is to be conducted at some future time, the

OPORD may be an operation plan (OPLAN) that will be implemented by appropriate instructions; for example, "Execute OPLAN 16 as OPORD 8; D-day, H-hour is 151700 July 199__". Changes to OPORDs normally are made by issuing a FRAGO. A new order is published whenever a significant change in the mission occurs or a new mission is received.

(1) An OPORD should include only the detail that is necessary for commanders of subordinate units to issue their own orders and to ensure coordination. The details of how supporting and specialist units are to carry out their tasks should be issued in their own orders, which will use the same format as an OPORD, unless otherwise specified.

(2) At division level and higher, the chief of staff supervises the staff input during the preparation of the OPORD to ensure compliance with the commander's guidance (concept). At brigade and battalion levels the S3, operations and training officer, has primary coordinating staff responsibility for preparation, publication, and distribution of the OPORD of the command. Other staff officers will provide those portions of the order pertaining to their responsibilities. This contribution varies from a single sentence to a complete annex, depending on the requirement and the staff officer concerned.

(3) An OPORD has a specified format. It may be written, oral, graphical (traces, overlays), or a combination of these formats. Formats and examples will be discussed in Part B, Lesson One. The method used to issue the order (for example, written or oral) is not determined by the level of command or the complexity of the operation but rather by the time available for planning.

b. **Fragmentary Order**. A FRAGO provides pertinent extracts form more detailed orders. It provides instructions, as it is developed, before the complete order has been developed; provides specific instructions to commanders who do not require the complete order; or, more usually, provides timely changes to existing order.

(1) Those elements found in a complete order are omitted when they have not changed, are not essential, or are incomplete at the time of issue. As a general rule a FRAGO is addressed to each commander required to take action; is addressed to higher and adjacent headquarters for information, if applicable; refers to a previous order, if applicable; indicates task organization changes, if applicable; when necessary for clarity, includes a brief outline of the situation that generated the requirement for the order, to include a statement of the mission, if changed; provides brief and specific instructions without loss of clarity; requests acknowledgment; and contains proper classification.

(2) A FRAGO is prepared and issued by either coordinating or special staff officers with command approval.

(3) A FRAGO does not have a specified format; however, to ensure understanding, the OPORD format is useful. A FRAGO may be issued orally.

c. **Warning Order**. A warning order (WO) gives subordinate units advance notice of a contemplated action or order which is to follow. Its purpose is to help units and their staffs

initiate the preparations for execution of a mission by giving them the maximum warning and the essential details of impending operations including planning time available.

(1)The amount of detail included in a WO depends on the time and means of communication available and the information necessary for proper planning and preparation by subordinate commanders. The WO may include the following in sequence:

(a) Enemy situation, events, probable mission, task, and operation.

(b) Earliest time of move or degree of notice to be given to the main body.

(c) Rendezvous and time for assembly for issue of the OPORD, stating whether commanders or representative are to attend, and maps required; or the time which written orders may be expected.

(d) Orders for preliminary action, reconnaissance, surveillance, and observation.

(e) Administrative and logistic instructions, any special equipment required, regrouping of transport, preliminary moves to assembly areas, if necessary.

(2) The wording of the WO must show clearly those parts which are to be executed, such as assembling for issue of the OPORD, and other parts which are only a warning, such as the probable task. The recipient must not be in doubt about what he must act on and what is a warning. Usually the task (mission) of the subordinate units (other than preliminary action, reconnaissance, surveillance, and observation) should not be given in a WO. Every WO involving movement should state at time before which there is no move. This means that a further order must be issued before that time giving actual move timings, or extending the period before which there will be no move, or placing troops at so many hours or minutes notice at move.

(3) At division, brigade, or battalion level a coordinating or a special staff officer may issue a WO; however, completion of appropriate staff coordination must be assured. At the company or platoon level the appropriate leader issues the warning order.

(4) A WO has no specified format. It is usually a brief oral or written message. The words "WARNING ORDER" precede the message test, and an acknowledgment is usually required.

d. **Other Types of Orders**. There are two other types of combat orders, administrative or logistics orders and SOP. At higher levels of command, the administrative or logistics order provides the commander's plan for administrative and logistic support of operations to include administrative movements. An administrative or logistic order may be issued with or in relation to an OPORD. It is used to provide information to the supported elements, and it serves as a basis for the orders of the supporting commanders to their units. At higher levels of command, the administrative or logistics order generally will replace the service support annex of an OPORD and be referred to in paragraph 4, SERVICE SUPPORT, of the OPORD. At lower

levels, paragraph 4, SERVICE SUPPORT, may be adequate without annexes or separate administrative/logistics orders.

(1) The purpose of an SOP is to list procedures that are unique to the organization and is used habitually for accomplishing routine or recurring actions or matters. It facilitates and expedites operations by reducing the number, length, and frequency of other types of orders by simplifying the preparation and the transmission of other orders; by simplifying training; by promoting understanding and teamwork among the commander, staff, and troops; by advising new arrivals or newly attached units of procedures followed in the organization; and by reducing confusion and errors.

(2) You, as an infantry platoon leader will primarily be concerned with OPORDs, warning orders, FRAGOs, and SOPs.

This completes the general discussion on combat orders. We will next discuss the elements of a battalion and company five-paragraph operation order.

PART A

IDENTIFYING ELEMENTS OF A BATTALION OR COMPANY FIVE-PARAGRAPH OPERATION PLAN (ORDER)

1. **General**. This part provides information on the preparation of combat orders. Combat orders set forth the details of tactical operations and administration in the field. They may be issued initially as a plan to become an order at some future specified time, or as stated contingencies arise.

a. Adequate, practical planning and the timely preparation and distribution of simple direct orders; the effective use of proper overlay symbology; and the implementation of a standardized reporting system are key factors to the success of any military operation.

b. Realistically, the commander and staff must understand that warning orders and fragmentary orders will be the normal means of communicating orders in combat. At the battalion level the tactical SOP can greatly reduce the verbiage contained in a written order and expedite staff actions and priorities in the planning process.

2. **Formats**. The specific format for operation plans and orders begins on the next page. The five paragraph format for battalion and company orders is described in detail. The orders may be typed or handwritten.

OPERATION PLAN (ORDER) FORMAT

OPERATION ORDER NO: (or Code Name)

References. Maps, charts, other relative documents. Time Zone used throughout the order.

Task Organization. Explain how the unit is organized for the operation. If there is no change to previous task organization, indicate "no change."

When shown under the OPORD heading or in an annex, units are grouped by command and control headquarters appropriate to the operation to be conducted. Normal grouping and sequence in which they are listed at company level are platoons, company control, and company trains. At the battalion level the sequence is teams, companies, battalion control and battalion trains. At the brigade level the sequence is task forces, battalions, brigade control and brigade trains.

The task organization of each command and control headquarters of the forces is shown by indenting subordinate units under the command and control headquarters heading. The indentation indicates that the unit is organic, assigned, or attached unless qualified by a parenthetical term such as operational control, OPCON or a support relationship such as brigade "BDE" or general support "GS".

1. **SITUATION**. Contains information on the overall situation essential to the subordinate commander's understanding of the current situation. This paragraph contains subparagraphs a, b, and c as shown below.

   a. **Enemy Forces**. Refer to the overlay and sketch (situation template). Information contained within this subparagraph should be a culmination of intelligence provided (by higher) and information gathered (facts and assumptions) which pertain to the accomplishment of the mission. This analysis will be stated as conclusions and addressed in each of these areas.

      (1) **Disposition, compositions, and strength**. This paragraph gives enemy information which will permit later development of enemy capabilities.

      (2) **Capabilities**. This listing provides a basis for developing those capabilities that the enemy can adopt as specific courses of action and their relative probability of adoption.

      (3) **Most probable course of action**. Concise statement of the enemy's course of action, determined by analyzing the possible courses of action open to the enemy, to inform your subordinate units of what to expect during execution.

   b. **Friendly Forces**. Information in this subparagraph should be limited to what subordinate commander's need to know to accomplish their assigned mission.

      (1) **Higher unit's mission.** A verbatim statement of the higher commander's concept of the operation statement.

      (2) **Left unit's mission**. This specifically addresses their assigned mission as stated in higher maneuver paragraph. This correlates directly to the HQ issuing the OPORD (for example. at the objective (OBJ).

      (3) **Right unit's mission**.

      (4) **Forward unit's mission**.

      (5) **Mission of unit in reserve or unit following**.

(6) **Units in support or reinforcing the higher unit**.

c. **Attachments and Detachments**. When not shown under the "Task Organization", listed here or in annex units attached or detached from the issuing headquarters, together with the effective times. If the Task Organization contains sufficient information, states "see task organization" and (DTG) of the task organization.

2. **MISSION**. This should be a clear, concise statement of the purpose to be accomplished by the command with accompanying purpose for doing it. This statement contains: the operation (i.e. attack or defend), all mission essential task(s) to be accomplished with corresponding purpose, and to ease understanding expressed by stating who (B Co), what (attacks to seize/defends to retain), when (DTG), where (GL123456), and why (to assist the 52d ID passage/to prevent crossing of Watt River).

3. **EXECUTION**.

a. **Concept of the operation**. Refer to the operation overlay and concept sketch. The statement of the commander's intentions expands on the purpose given in the mission statement. It addresses the results expected, how these events shape future operations, and how (in broad terms) the force (as a whole) achieves those results. Be precise, this statement should not exceed six sentences.

(1) **Maneuver**. Address all major subordinate maneuver units. Each subordinate maneuver unit will receive instructions in accordance with (IAW) the mission order format (task and purpose) to include the reserve (if applicable). Only information critical to issuing commander's mission accomplishment is included herein: list the subordinate unit's mission (task and purpose) that directly contributes to fulfilling the commander's concept. All remaining instructions to subordinate maneuver units are issued in tasks to maneuver units.

(2) **Fires**. Refer to fires overlay (target list). Describes the concept (purpose) of fire support to synchronize and compliment the scheme of maneuver. All available indirect fire systems should be addressed. The fires paragraph should address--

(a) Priority of fires (to include shifting of priorities).

(b) Priority targets (identify control of priority targets: family of scatterable mines (FASCAM), final protective fire (FPF), and so forth.

(c) Restrictive control measures on the use of fires (if necessary).

(3) **Counterair operations**. Refer to overlay (if used). Describes overall concept of air defense artillery (ADA) employment in support of the scheme of maneuver. Employment of passive and active air defense measures (if applicable or other than SOP). Establish priority of air defense and provide weapons control and warning status.

(4) **Intelligence**. Refer to overlay (if used). Describe how the overall information collection plan supports the concept. Establishes priority and coordinates responsibility for collection between organic and supporting units.

(5) **Electronic warfare**. Describe how electronic warfare will support the overall concept. Establishes priority for jamming electronic surveillance (equipment and capability to accomplish these measures not normally employed below division level). Employment of passive and active measures (if applicableor other than SOP) should be addressed here.

(6) **Engineering**. Refer to obstacle and barrier overlay (if appropriate). Describe how the integration of mobility, countermobility, survivability assets and activities support the scheme of maneuver. The engineer paragraph should address--

    (a) Purpose to be achieved through the employment of engineer assets and obstacles, mines, and fortifications.

    (b) Priority of effort (mobility, countermobility, or survivability).

    (c) Priority of engineer support or work (Team A then Team B).

    (d) Employment of FASCAM (if applicable).

    (e) Restrictions on the employment of engineer assets (if applicable).

(7) **Additional Paragraphs**. Include additional subparagraphs as required. Example: Deception: Identify deception objective, purpose and target.

b. **Tasks to maneuver units**. Specify tasks and purpose that will be accomplished by each subordinate unit as they appear in the task organization. List each in separate numbered subparagraphs with the reserve addressed last. When instructions are multiple, they are itemized. If there is a priority or a sequence of accomplishment, it is stated. DO NOT list tasks that affect two or more units, or tasks previously stated (for example, mission essential tasks previously addressed) or adequately addressed on the operation overlay. If a subunit has no additional instructions, the word "none" or a blank space follows its subparagraph.

c. **Tasks to combat support units**. List tasks to combat support units in the following subparagraphs in the same order they appear in the task organization. List only those specific tasks that must be accomplished by combat support units not specified elsewhere.

NOTE

All units appearing in the task organization as major subordinate commands or under headquarters control will have their own subparagraphs. The only exceptions are the trains elements.

d. **Coordinating instructions**. Contain details of coordination and control applicable to two or more units in the command. Items that may be addressed in coordinating instructions include--

(1) Priority intelligence requirement (PIR) and information reporting (IR) reporting tasks.

(2) Mission-oriented protective posture (MOPP) level.

(3) Troop safety and operation exposure guide (OEG).

(a) Engagement and disengagement criteria and instructions.

(b) Fire distribution and control measures.

(c) Consolidation and reorganization instructions.

(d) Report requirements (crossing phase lines, checkpoints...).

(e) Terrorism-counteraction instructions. Rules of engagement.

4. **SERVICE SUPPORT**. This paragraph contains a statement of the combat service support (CSS) instructions and arrangements supporting the operation that are of primary interest to the unit being supported. For example, a battalion order includes information pertinent to the sustainment of maneuver companies and special platoons. Include information that are changes to established SOPs or previously issued orders. Reference may be made to a service support annex or overlay. Subparagraphs are as follows--

a. **General**. References the SOPs which govern the sustainment operations of the unit. Provides current and proposed trains locations. Identifies service support overlay or operations overlay which will depict at a minimum the following information: supply routes, combat trains, and field trains command post (CP) locations, and logistics release points (LRPs).

b. **Material and Services**--

(1) **Supply**. May contain a subparagraph for each class of supply, maps, water, special supplies, and captured enemy material. When applicable the subparagraph contains supply constraints and limitations, specific operating hours, distribution methods or schedules and other information which alters the standard manner in which supplies are managed, controlled, handled or distributed.

(2) **Transportation**. Provides route limitations (military load bridge classifications, tunnels, sharp turns, slide areas) and contains traffic priorities by unit and vehicle type.

(3) **Services**. Include information and instructions for supported units that prescribe the type of service available, designation and location of the unit or installation providing the service, assignments to support units, and schedules for services.

(a) Graves Registration.

(b) Field Services. Laundry, bath, decontamination.

(c) Health Services.

(4) **Labor**. Include instructions and restrictions on the use of civilian labor and enemy prisoners of war (POWs).

(5) **Maintenance**. Include maintenance priorities by unit or vehicle type, recovery priorities, locations of facilities and collection points, and authority for controlled substitution.

c. **Medical Evacuation and Hospitalization**. Procedures for the evacuation of wounded. Also include location of the battalion aid station (BAS).

d. **Personnel**. Procedures for evacuation of EPWs and location of EPW collection points.

e. **Civil-Military Cooperation**. Instructions affecting the civilian population.

f. **Miscellaneous**. Destruction of supplies if not SOP and any other CSS information not covered.

5. **COMMAND AND SIGNAL**.

    a. **Command**.

        (1) Location of higher command and CP.

        (2) Location of unit commander and CP.

        (3) Location of the unit executive officer (XO) or second in command (2IC).

        (4) Succession of command if not SOP.

    b. **Signal**.

        (1) Signal Operating Instructions (SOI) index in effect.

        (2) Listening silence if applicable.

        (3) Methods of communications in priority.

        (4) Emergency and visual signals.

        (5) Code Words.

Acknowledge:

OPORD_____   _____
      (NUMBER)   (ISSUING HQ)

                            Issuing commander's signature
                            Name
                            Rank

OFFICIAL:
(signature)
Name
Position

Annexes: Listed alphabetically by letter and title in the sequence they appear in the order.

Distribution:

NOTE

The presentation of an order may be concluded with a commander's visualization describing the flow of the battle and the integration of all assets. The visualization illustrates synchronization in the mind of the commander. If the information in the order is clearly presented, then a visualization should not be needed.

3. **Fragmentary Order**. The FRAGOs provide pertinent extracts from more detailed orders. They provide instructions, as they are developed, before the complete order has been developed; provide specific instructions to commanders who do not require the complete order; or, more usually, provide timely changes to existing orders. FRAGOs do not have a specified format, however, to ensure understanding, the FRAGO should follow the basic format of the operation order. Those elements found in a complete OPORD are omitted when issuing the follow-on FRAGO if they have not changed, are not essential, or are incomplete at the time of issue.

4. **Graphic Overlays**. The overlay is a graphic representation of the commander's scheme of maneuver and intent. Its purpose is to ensure coordinated action between all units. Overlays should be prepared on the same scale map the subordinate commanders are using. Overlay techniques involve the use of military symbology and control measures from FM 101-5-1 to graphically portray, in a condensed form, plans, orders, and information concerning the tactical situation. Only the minimal necessary control measures are used so as not to clutter or confuse the overlay. If control measures or symbols other than those specified in FM 101-5-1 are used, a legend should be placed on the overlay to define the graphic.

a. When the overlay and the written portion of the plan are separate documents--

(1) The overlay is an annex when it is issued as an integral part of the order and has the same distribution as the order. It need only be identified by title and headquarters. For example, Annex A (Operation Overlay) to OPORD 2, Task Force (TF) 2-11.

(2) A reference to the overlay annex is contained within the written portion of the order.

b. When the overlay and any written portion of the order are on the same piece of paper--

(1) A single heading and ending serve both the overlay and the written portion.

(2) No written reference to the overlay is required.

c. When representations by colors are practicable, the following colors are used in overlays--

(1) Green - All man-made obstacles.

(2) Red - Enemy units and control measures.

(3) Yellow - All areas of nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) contamination.

(4) Blue or Black - Friendly units and control measures.

(5) If only one color is available, friendly symbols are outlined with single lines, enemy symbols with double lines.

d. The grid intersections nearest the two opposite corners of the overlay should be traced on the overlay and labeled with the proper grid coordinates. A four-digit grid is sufficient. These register (witness) marks show the person who receives the overlay exactly where it fits on the map. If possible, register marks should be the same for each overlay.

e. An example of the commander's visualization of the conduct of operation may be as follows--

(1) "Div attacks with 1st Bde on the east making the main attack and 2d Bde, on the west making the secondary attack. 3d Bde will be in reserve; 1-23 Cav screens division east flank."

(2) "Our initial dispositions are such that no major readjustment of our forces is required. Our main attack will cross the LD with at least two mechanized battalions and a tank battalion under the control of the 1st Bde. This penetration will require a heavy artillery preparation before and during the attack. We should employ radio silence and sound electronic counter measures procedures, plus smoke to conceal our movement. We must jam the enemy's command and control and fire support nets. This should enable us to cross the first major compartment and to gain HILL 339 rapidly. Although the enemy on HILL 339 should be weakened by our artillery and airstrikes, our success in this course of action will depend on the success of the supporting attack to neutralize enemy observation and fire from HILLS 347 and 351 and the success of our deception of the enemy as to the location of our main attack. The supporting attack will have at least two mechanized battalions and some tanks and will be under the control of the 2d Bde. Once the main attack reaches HILL 339, we can expect a counterattack by the enemy's immediately available reserves, probably elements of one or more of the unlocated tank battalions. The containment of this enemy reaction may be critical and may require the use of the main attack's reserve. The tank battalion initially allocated to the main attack is available to assist in meeting this threat. The attack on HILL 334 crosses a major compartment. Smoke should be used to conceal this movement. This rapid movement will depend on the success of our artillery and airstrikes on the enemy positions on HILL 334 and possible enemy reinforcement or local counterattack. Also, the securing of ATLANTA HILL by the supporting attack will assist the attack on HILL 334. From HILL 334 to HILL 306, our forces will cross a minor cross compartment. This will be the most critical phase in the attack, since an enemy counterattack with up to a medium tank regiment in strength can be expected. We should attempt to delay and confuse the enemy regiment once it starts to move, by jamming its major command nets. With this amount of tank strength against us, our main attack should have at least two tank battalions so that we can allocate an additional tank battalion to the main attack. The threat presented by the enemy tank regiment and the unlocated tank battalions dictates that the division reserve under the control of the 3d Bde be a strong reserve, consisting of two mechanized battalions and a tank battalion. To repulse this counterattack, the reserve should follow the main attack closely to insure our maximum armor strength at this critical point. Also, at this time, it will be essential that the supporting attack control ATLANTA HILL. If the enemy does not counterattack, we should be able to move

quickly to the final objective, and the supporting attack must continue to exert pressure by pushing forward toward HILLS 271 and 362 so that the main attack can continue to advance. The main attack must cross a final cross compartment to secure HILL 305 after it secures HILL 306. The supporting attack, however, will move along high ground when it departs from HILL 326 to secure HILL 322. The use of artillery support and air support to neutralize the remaining enemy elements on the division objective will be particularly important during this phase of the operation. The enemy does have the advantage of excellent observation of the approach of our main attack to each key terrain feature. The success of this attack will depend heavily on the success of our artillery fires and airstrikes and the success of our supporting attack in securing ATLANTA HILL and HILL 326 in rapid succession. Our west flank is protected by an unfordable obstacle. Minimum assets will be needed to screen this obstacle and give us warning if a threat starts to develop on the west side of the river. The unfordable obstacle should allow us sufficient time to divert forces to counter the threat. The 1st Bde should have sufficient assets to provide a warning along this short, exposed flank. This course of action will require the use of the division cavalry squadron as screening force on the east flank of the division to impede movement of enemy units until HILL 271 can be secured. On securing the division objective, reorganization must be accomplished rapidly and preparations made to continue the attack to the south."

f. The name and the rank of the commander appear on all copies. The original copy (number 1) must be signed by the commander or a specifically authorized representative. If the commander's signature cannot be reproduced, the S3 authenticates subsequent copies of the order. The signed copy is the historical copy that remains in the files of the headquarters.

g. If the commander or his authorized representative signs a master copy, the use of which permits automatic reproduction of the document with his signature no further authentication is required. If this signature is not reproduced, authentication by the preparing staff officer is required on all subsequent copies and only the last name and the rank of the commander appear in the signature block.

5. **Techniques of Preparation**.

a. **Use of Abbreviations**. It must be emphasized that abbreviations are used to save time and space but only if there is no loss of clarity. The use of abbreviations should be consistent throughout any plan or order. AR 310-50 contains a listing of current authorized abbreviations used within the Department of the Army.

b. **Designation of Units**. The numerical designation of any Army or Air Force unit is given in arabic ordinal numerals such as 21st Army Group, 1st Tactical Air Force (TAF), 3d Army, and 1st Logistical Command. Corps use roman numerals, e.g. II Corps. Acceptable methods of abbreviating the full designation of units follows: 1/A/1-62 IN (1st Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 62d Infantry), or 1/B/23 Sig (1st Platoon, Company B, 23d Signal Battalion). Note that the slash (/) is used to separate each level of command that actually exists and is operating in the field while the dash - is used to indicate the designation of a unit organized under the

Combat Arms Regimental System (CAR). A minus sign (-) or the word "minus" indicates a unit of less than normal size and denotes detachment of an organic element.

c. **Designation of Places or Features**.

(1) Geographical names of definite areas, cities, towns, rivers, hills, mountains, and other places that are named specifically on a map are printed in CAPITAL letters in the order. The spelling in the order must be the same as that appearing on the map referred to in the heading of the order. Hills will be identified by the word HILL followed by the numerals of the surveyed elevation, e.g., HILL 439. Hills for which no surveyed elevations are shown will be identified by describing their location, for example, HILL at PV6390 OR HIGH GROUND AT PV6390.

(2) Coordinates for a place or feature are shown the first time the name appears in the order. Thereafter, coordinates are repeated only as necessary for clarity. This rule does not apply to paragraph 2, MISSION, which always includes coordinates of objectives to be seized or secured, or sector/battle positions to be defended.

(3) Areas are normally described by naming the northernmost point first and giving the remaining points in clockwise order. Positions are described from left to right, facing the enemy.

(4) Roads and railroads are identified either by name or by sequence of points on the road with names appearing in the direction of movement or, when there is no movement, from left to right or rear to front, assuming that the person designating the road or railroad, is facing the enemy. All other lines are designated in the same manner.

(5) Riverbanks. When referring to an attack of a river line, the friendly shore is referred to as the near bank and the enemy shore as the far bank. Riverbanks can also be described as compass points, for example, "North," "East," and so forth.

(6) Direction. Compass points with a capital initial letter are used in place of the terms left and right. If the situation indicates the advisability of including the terms left and right, they are placed in parentheses immediately following the appropriate compass point. Specific directions are given as angles from true, magnetic, or grid north (the type used is always specified).

d. **Date and time**. Dates include the day, month, and year (6 August 199_). In stating a night, both dates are included (night 4-5 August 199_) Terms such as PM, AM, daylight, dusk, end of evening nautical twilight (EENT), and before morning nautical twilight (BMNT) are not used in lieu of DTG. Times are expressed in the 24 hour clock system by means of a four digit Arabic number. If necessary, a letter indicating the time zone is added after the last digit (1300Z). A DTG is a six digit number expressing date and time. The first two digits indicate the date of the month and the last four digits indicate the time. The month and year are added to avoid confusion. A complete DTG would appear as (241000Z January 1994).

(1) The time zone applies to the location of the operation. Times in other zones are converted to this time zone for the operation. This entry is required in all OPORDs, and OPLANs, and will be shown as the entry following "Reference". In addition, a time zone suffix will be shown following the last digit of the DTG. For example, 062025Z Aug indicates 8:25 PM Greenwich mean time, 6 Aug --. When the date and hour for beginning an operation are not specified in an order or plan, the following applies--

(2) The day on which the operation commences is called D-day. The system is D-2, D, D+1. D-day is normally to be used for planned operations, and where necessary the code name of the operation should be added. For example, "OVERLORD D-DAY."

(3) The system for numbering hours and minutes in an operation is the same as that for days, but the letter H is normally used. The numbering of hours is H-1 hour, H-30 minutes, H-hour, H+30 minutes, H+2 hours, and so on.

e. **Format**. Written OPORDS have a heading, a body, and ending.

f. **Construction Techniques**. The major paragraphs are shown in capital letters and are used without punctuation; for example, MISSION is the correct heading for paragraph 2. Subparagraph headings follow the normal rule for capitalization and are followed by a period, for example, a. Enemy Forces., or h. Coordinating Instructions. The second and succeeding lines of each paragraph and subparagraph should begin at the left margin.

6. **Summary**. This concludes the discussion on preparing and issuing a five-paragraph battalion or company OPORD. This part of the subcourse began with a discussion on the contents of a battalion or company OPORD, then moved to general discussions on the techniques of preparation. We will now discuss the sequence of elements in a five-paragraph platoon OPORD, and place those elements in the proper sequence.

PART B

IDENTIFYING SEQUENCE OF ELEMENTS IN A FIVE-PARAGRAPH PLATOON OPERATION ORDER, AND PLACE IN FORMAT

1. **General**. When your unit is conducting offensive operations, you, as the platoon leader of an infantry platoon will be given a company operation order for an attack. You must then develop a clear and concise oral platoon order for the attack and issue it to your squad leaders. In issuing the order, you make sure the squad leaders understand their mission and the specific coordinating instructions that apply to them. The order must contain the following items, properly placed in the five-paragraph format--

a. Enemy and friendly situation.

b. The mission of the platoon and squad.

c. The tactical plan to accomplish the mission.

d. Coordinating instructions.

e. The location of the platoon leader during the attack.

f. Signal instructions.

2. **Platoon Order**. You are responsible for informing the men through your squad leaders. A primary way of doing so is through the platoon order. Your platoon order is based on the operation order given by the company commander. The platoon order must be altered to delete information that does not concern the platoon and to add sufficient detail to allow planning by the squad leaders. The oral platoon order should follow the same basic five-paragraph format used in the company order. An example of a platoon OPORD is shown below--

---

PLATOON OPERATION ORDER FORMAT

Task Organization. The task organization (TO) indicates the internal organization or tactical groupings for mission accomplishment. TO will also depict command and support relationships between units or elements and may also list names or titles assigned to tactical groupings.

1. **SITUATION.** This paragraph provides an overview of the general situation. You should extract information from the higher level situation paragraph of the OPORD that pertains to your mission, rather than simply "parrot" what is there. You should include--

 a. **Enemy forces**.

 (1) Situation. Composition, disposition, location, movement, morale, strength, status of supply, and so forth.

 (2) Capabilities. Types of vehicles, weapons, special training, NBC, and so forth.

 (3) Most probable course of action. Attack, defend, or delay.

 b. **Friendly forces**. This subparagraph contains the verbatim mission statements of higher, adjacent, and supporting or reinforcing unit's listed in the following sequence--

 (1) Higher headquarters. The mission of the company.

 (2) Adjacent units. Listed in sequence left, right, front, rear.

 (3) Supporting or reinforcing units. Those units supporting or reinforcing the platoon (for example, engineers or ground surveillance radar team).

 c. **Attachments and detachments.** List here units attached to or detached from the company and platoon (when not shown in the TO) with the effective time.

2. **MISSION**. The mission is a clear, concise statement of the task(s) to be accomplished by the issuing unit and its purpose. The mission statement is derived from the commander's mission analysis during the decision process and it addresses the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and WHY of the operation. All of the mission-essential tasks (critical to the success of the operation, as determined by the commander) to be accomplished are normally addressed in chronological sequence in the mission

statement. The mission is always stated in full and must stand alone without reference to any other documents except a map. Additionally, the mission statement, in addressing the "WHERE" of the operation, will always list the terrain feature (for example, "HILL 302" or "Road Junction") and grid coordinates. The terms "OBJECTIVE" and "Battle Position" may also be included if desired, but must be related to terrain features or grid coordinates.

3. **EXECUTION**. The execution paragraph contains the "How to" information needed for mission accomplishment. This paragraph will consist of three elements: concept of the operation, subordinate unit subparagraphs, and coordinating instructions.

    a. **Concept of the operation**.

        (1) Maneuver. This is the statement of your visualization of the execution of an operation chronologically from start to completion. It accurately provides the subordinate elements with your intent in order that mission accomplishment is possible in the time available, and in the absence of additional communications or further instructions. It includes all objectives, sectors, or battle positions for maneuver elements. Designation of a reserve will also be included in this part of the concept for any type mission.

        (2) Fires. Complements and supports the scheme of maneuver. It includes the priority of fire, priority targets, FPFs, preparatory fires (to include start time and duration) and any special fires, such as nuclear, chemical, smoke operations, or close-air support. Only indirect fires are addressed in this portion of the concept.

        (3) Obstacles, mines, and fortifications. May be included in the concept (always include for defensive operations). Includes a brief discussion of the platoon obstacle plan and how it directly relates to your scheme of maneuver. Also includes priorities of obstacle work and types of operations (mobility, countermobility, and survivability may also be addressed).

        (4) Intelligence and electronic warfare (IEW). May be included in the concept and includes a brief discussion of intelligence collection priorities and electronic warfare priorities. You may direct any attached surveillance assets to prioritize their efforts that are directly related to the success of the platoon operation.

    b. **Tasks to Maneuver Units**. Identifies the specific task to be accomplished by each subordinate element of the platoon; instructions presented in concept of operation may be repeated. If no further instructions are to be issued, state "NONE".

    c. **Tasks to Combat Support Units**. A platoon may receive an attachment of CS units:for example, one engineer squad. List tasks to CS units in subparagraphs in the order they appear in the task organization.

    d. **Coordinating instructions**: Last subparagraph of EXECUTION is entitled **"coordinating instructions"**. It contains details of coordination and control applicable to two or more elements of the command issuing the order (with the exception of signal items which are normally

addressed in paragraph 5b). When there are no coordinating instructions, the word "NONE" is indicated. Typical items included in coordinating instructions are--

> (1) Reports to be made other than SOP.

> (2) NBC troop safety instructions and OEG.

> (3) MOPP levels (if different from SOP).

> (4) Air defense criteria.

> (5) Consolidation and reorganization instructions.

> (6) PIR (if not stated in an intelligence annex).

> (7) Coordination of passage of lines.

> (8) Effective DTG of attachments and detachments (if not listed in TASK ORG or paragraph 1c).

> (9) Effective DTG or conditions the order or plan becomes effective when the order or plan is not effective upon receipt.

4. **SERVICE SUPPORT**. This paragraph contains combat service support instructions and information relating to the operation. (NOTE: Reference may be made to unit SOP if appropriate; items not required are omitted.)

> a. **Material and service**. Status of classes of supply; transportation, services, and maintenance.

> b. **Personnel**. Unit strengths, replacements, maintenance of morale, discipline, law and order, and headquarters management.

> c. **Civil-military cooperation**. Limitations or restrictions concerning local area; psychological operations.

> d. **Miscellaneous**. EPW procedures.

> e. **Combat service support facilities**. The locations and proposed locations of CSS facilities (combat or field trains) may be indicated; however, this may not be necessary if shown graphically on an overlay.

5. **COMMAND AND SIGNAL**. This paragraph contains instructions and information relating to command and to functions of communications-electronics (CE). It will contain two subparagraphs entitled "command" and "signal" in that sequence. Items addressed are as follows:

> a. **Command**. As a minimum, will include the initial location of the commander (to facilitate messenger operations if it becomes necessary). It may also include the command post locations (required if CP locations are not shown graphically) and CP axis of displacement. Succession of command may be indicated if different from SOP.

> b. **Signal**. As a minimum, will list the SOI index by specific number in effect for the operations as well as any changes scheduled during the period of the operation. May also list alternate or

emergency signal restrictions, such as "radio listening silence". Detailed signal instructions normally will be included in a signal annex.

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3. Alter Company Order. As the platoon leader, you must look for items in the company order that must be altered to fit your platoon's mission.

　　a. Assume that paragraphs 2 and 3 of the company order are given as--

　　　　(1) "2. **MISSION**: Company A attacks 240600 May to seize HILL 492 and HILL 475 and continues the attack, on order, to seize HILL 510 to prevent disruption of the BN main attack."

　　　　(2) "3. **EXECUTION**: 2d Platoon makes the main attack on the right to seize Objective 1 and, on order, Objective 3, to prevent the enemy's withdraw."

　　b. You might alter those paragraphs as follows--

　　　　(1) "2. **MISSION**: 2d Platoon attacks 240600 May to seize HILL 492 and, on order, HILL 510, to prevent the enemy's withdrawal."

　　　　(2) "3. **EXECUTION**: 2d Squad leader, your squad will be the fire support base for the platoon. You will establish your base-of-fire from the ridgeline at coordinates LP01230321. Commence firing on my order. 1st Squad leader, your squad will attack to seize..."

4. Similar Paragraphs. Paragraph 1 of the platoon order should contain the mission of the company that was stated in paragraph 2 of the company order. Paragraphs 4 and 5 will be similar to paragraphs 4 and 5 of the company order, but narrowed down to apply only to the platoon. For example, if paragraph 4 of the company order gives the location of the battalion field trains, the platoon order will probably not contain that information because it does not directly affect the squads. Your responsibility is to give the men the information that pertains to them. The five-paragraph order format should be used as a checklist to prevent omitting important information. It is not all inclusive, however, and may be modified as necessary.

5. Location of Order. Whenever possible, you should give the order to the squad leaders from a vantage point on or near the ground to be attacked. From such a point, it is possible to orient the squad leaders by pointing out important terrain features. However, many times this will not be possible, and you will have to sketch the terrain on the ground. Terrain models are easy to construct, and they allow the leader to relate his order to terrain features.

6. Summary. This concludes the discussion on the elements of a five-paragraph platoon operation order. During this portion of the subcourse we discussed the importance of developing a clear and concise oral platoon order that covers the situation, mission, execution, service support and command and signal instructions. General guidance of what each of these elements must contain was also discussed. Next we will go through the sequence of a platoon leader's actions after he receives the company attack order. In this example, the platoon leader and the squad leaders will follow the

sequence of a five-paragraph OPORD when they issue their OPORDs. You should also note the reference to the SOP which serves to speed up the issuance of orders and expedite operations.

Part C

PREPARE A FIVE-PARAGRAPH PLATOON OFFENSIVE OPERATION ORDER AND IDENTIFY THE MISSION OF A RIFLE PLATOON AS THE COMPANY RESERVE IN AN ATTACK

1. **Platoon Combat Orders**. This part of the subcourse will cover the sequence of events leading to the issuance of a platoon and squad oral OPORD, and an example of you, the platoon leader, issuing a warning order and a FRAGO. As discussed, combat orders are written or oral. You will use them to transmit information and instructions to subordinates. The use of combat orders, expressed in standard formats or containing essential elements, ensures that you convey your time you and your subordinate leaders have to prepare it. SOPs complement combat orders. They allow leaders to refer to them rather than issue the same instructions that occur often.

2. **Platoon Warning Order**. You use warning orders to alert your subordinate leaders of an impending mission and to provide initial instructions so that subordinates have a maximum amount of time to prepare for its execution. As discussed, although there is no prescribed format, a warning order contains five essential elements--

   a. The mission.

   b. Who is participating in the operation.

   c. Time of the operation.

   d. Any special instructions.

   e. Time and place for issuance of the complete order.

3. **Additional Instructions**. In addition to these essentials, you should also issue necessary administration instructions (equipment, supplies, meal and fueling schedule) as well as specific instructions not covered by SOP that are important to the preparation for the mission.

4. **Platoon Warning Order**. You may issue the warning order to your platoon sergeant, forward observer (FO), aid man, and squad leaders, or only to the platoon sergeant if time does not permit the gathering of others.

5. **Squad Warning Order**. Squad leaders normally issues the warning order to all squad members. Preparation for the operation begins immediately based on special instructions and the platoon SOP. The platoon sergeant keeps close watch on the preparations made by the men. He insures that instructions are carried out.

   a. Following is a sample platoon warning order and a subsequent squad warning order--

SAMPLE PLATOON WARNING ORDER

"Our mission is to attack the town of HICKS at 1830. The enemy has some good positions in the buildings. There may also be enemy tanks in the town. Draw six grenades for each man, and one AT4 per man. Each squad will carry 10 blocks of C4, 10 nonelectric blasting caps, 10 fuse lighters, 100 feet of detonating cord, and 10 feet of fuse. The platoon sergeant will tell you where and when you can pick it up. Let me know by 1330 if you have any problems with radios or weapons. Meet me back here at 1405. At that time, we will move up to the ridge, overlooking the town, where I will give the complete order."

b. After hearing the platoon leader's warning order, each squad leader give his squad a warning order--

SAMPLE SQUAD WARNING ORDER

"Our mission is to attack the town of HICKS at 1830 as part of the platoon. The enemy has well-prepared positions in the buildings and probably has tanks with him. Each man will carry six grenades and one AT4 in addition to the standard load for rifles and grenade launchers. Sergeant Jones, your team will handle our demolitions: Draw 10 blocks of C4, 10 nonelectric blasting caps, 10 fuse ignitors, 100 feet of detonating cord, and 10 feet of fuse. Make sure you test burn the fuse. Private Smith, carry a climbing rope and grappling hook. The platoon sergeant will be here in 20 minutes to tell us where and when we can pick up our ammunition and equipment. I'm leaving now to get the platoon order; Sergeant White is in charge until I get back. We will meet here at 1515 for the OPORD."

c. You or your platoon sergeant must ensure that your squad leaders have been trained to cover the following information when they issue a warning order:

(1) Stated the mission.

(2) Stated known information about the enemy.

(3) Stated additional equipment or weapons needed for the mission.

(4) Assigned individual responsibilities regarding special equipment and weapons.

(5) Designated the chain of command in his absence.

(6) Stated when, where, and to whom the OPORD would be given.

(7) Warning order was as clear, concise, and complete as possible.

3. **Platoon Operation Order**. As discussed, The OPORD supplies needed information and instructions to subordinates. It outlines what must be done to accomplish a specific mission through coordinated effort. You use the order to tell your subordinates how you intend to fight the battle. It ensures that the platoon and squad know everything necessary to accomplish the mission. Consistent use of a standard format allows the leader to refine SOPs and streamline his orders. The standard OPORD format is used by leaders to organize their thoughts in a logical sequence.

4. **Operation Overlay**. An operation overlay is a trace of graphics from an operation map. Its purpose is to reduce the content and ensure understanding of the written or oral order. Normally, platoon and squad leaders will not be issued operation overlays. However, in conjunction with higher leaders'

orders, platoon and squad leaders should transfer graphics to their maps. This will allow them to plan their actions based on a map reconnaissance deeper than the terrain may allow them to see. The overlay or transference should be simple but neatly done. It should include all control measures used during the operation and all other information that can be depicted graphically, especially navigation and fire control measures such as checkpoints, target reference points (TRPs), and engagement areas.

5. **Fragmentary Order**. The platoon fragmentary order is issued to make a change to an existing order. Therefore, FRAGOs address only those items from the OPORD that are changed. Since FRAGOs are normally used during the conduct of an operation, instructions should be brief and specific. Although there is no standard format for a FRAGO, the following essential items are normally included--

> a. Situation. enemy and friendly - includes a brief description of the enemy and friendly situations and should indicate the reason for the change in instructions.

> b. Changes to the organization - may include the attachment or detachment of the platoon or part of it.

> c. Orders to subordinate units - should be done by element. To avoid confusion, no element should be left out.

> d. Fire support, if applicable - indicates any change in priorities or assets.

> e. Coordinating instructions - as in the OPORD, includes all instructions that apply to two or more elements.

> f. When possible, the FRAGO should be issued to all personnel concerned at a central location. When that is not possible, the FRAGO may be issued by radio, telephone, or messenger. Regardless of how it is issued, all changes to the mission caused by the FRAGO must be understood by all who received the original order. An example of a FRAGO is shown below--

SAMPLE FRAGO

ENEMY/ FRIENDLY SITUATIONS:	"Enemy resistance near HILL 219 (Objective JAY) is extremely light. Estimated enemy tank section, in well-prepared positions in vicinity of HILL 525 (Objective DOG), has stopped 1st Platoon."
ORDERS TO SUBORDINATE UNITS:	"Team ATLAS continues attack to seize Objective CAT. 1st Platoon will contain enemy in vicinity of Objective DOG. 3d Platoon will continue to follow 2d Platoon until north of town of LIENBOLZ (NB789689). 2d Platoon attacks to seize HILL 620 (Objective BLUE)."
FIRE SUPPORT:	"Priority of fire remains with 1st Platoon."
COORDINATING INSTRUCTIONS:	"New boundary between 2d Platoon and 3d Platoon is from NB580123 to NB637213."

6. **Unit SOP**. The unit SOP is a set of instructions having the force of orders. It covers areas that lend themselves to standardization with no loss of effectiveness. Many portions of the unit SOP should be built around tactical drills. SOPs facilitate and expedite operations by:

a. Reducing the number, length, and frequency of combat orders.

b. Simplifying the preparation and transmission of combat orders.

c. Promoting understanding and "teamwork" between the leaders and troops.

7. **Sample Attack Situation**. The following is an example of an attack situation involving the issuance of platoon and squad orders. The sequence of events begins after you, as the 1st Platoon leader have received the company attack order.

a. **Background**. Company B, 1ST BN, 66th Infantry, has been attacking since 0600 and is now halted east of CEDAR ROAD. Company B is organized with three rifle platoons, a weapons platoon, an attached TOW Section from the battalion, and a company headquarters. The attached TOW section is further attached to 3d Platoon. The company is preparing to attack at 1300 to seize OBJ BLUE as part of the battalion's attack. OBJ BLUE has been occupied by an enemy platoon-size force for about 4 hours. Company B will attack with 1st Platoon on the north to seize OBJ No 1, 2d Platoon on the south to seize OBJ 2, and 3d Platoon supporting by fire from HILL 500. Company B's TOW section will support from the line of departure (LD). The Mortar Section will support from Its position behind the LD. Priority of fire is to 1st Platoon. There will be a 15-minute artillery preparation of OBJ BLUE on order of the battalion commander. Company B must prepare to continue that attack to the west on order.

b. **Platoon Order**. As 1st Platoon leader you have decided to maintain control of the Dragons and machine guns until the objective is seized. All squad leaders have been getting their men ready for the attack. Due to the enemy situation and the lack of a good observation position from which to see the objective, you use a terrain model to explain your order. You begin--

(1) "Before I start with the order, let me explain this terrain model. (You point to the terrain model to identify each feature.) This rock represents where we are now. This is the attack position. This north-south road is CEDAR road. It is the LD. Our direction of attack will be generally along this creek bed. This is the platoon release point. This is the assault position. This is the company's objective, HILL 522. This is Red Arrow Road, running north to south through the company's objective. This is HILL 500, 3d Platoon's position. Find these features on your maps, is everybody ready?

(2) We have been pushing the enemy back all day. He is now preparing a defense on the high ground along RED ARROW ROAD. There is about a platoon defending on HILL 522. This position has been occupied for about 4 hours, so we can expect to see two-man positions and overhead cover prepared.

(3) Our company attacks as apart of the battalion's attack at 1300 today to seize OBJ BLUE (HILL 522), and it must be prepared to continue the attack to the west. Second Platoon attacks on our left at 1300 to seize OBJ 2. 3rd platoon supports by fire from

HILL 500. The company TOWs will support from the LD. The company's order of movement will be 1st platoon, company headquarters, 2d platoon, and 3d platoon. Company C attacks on the right at 1300 to seize OBJ RED. We have a MEDIC, FO, and FO RATELO attached.

(4) We attack as part of the company at 1300 to seize OBJ 1, GL137867, and will be prepared to continue the attack to the west.

(5) Our platoon will lead the company. We will leave this location using traveling, at 1245. We will pass through the attack position, and cross the LD at 1300, using traveling overwatch with 1st squad leading, then platoon HQ, 2d squad and 3d squad. When we reach the platoon release point, we will follow the northwestern creek bed using bounding overwatch. There will be a 15-minute artillery preparation of the objective. It will begin before we reach the assault position. In the assault position, we will deploy on line and assault on my order. First squad will be in the center, 2d squad will be on the left, and 3d squad will be on the right. I will control the machineguns and Dragons during the attack. Our platoon has priority or fire.

(a) First Squad. You are the base squad. Seize the center part of the objective. During the assault, stay oriented to the southwest about halfway between the hill top on the left and the road intersection on the right. Send me your Dragon gunner.

(b) Second Squad. Seize the left part of the objective. Guide on, and tie in with, the base squad. Send me your Dragon gunner.

(c) Third Squad. Seize the right part of the objective. Guide on, and tie in with, the base squad. Send me your Dragon gunner.

(6) After the objective is seized, we will consolidate by the clock method. Twelve o'clock will be due west, 270 degrees. 2d squad, consolidate from 9 to 11. Tie in with 2d Platoon's right flank squad. 1st squad, consolidate from 11 to 1, stay on the west side of the road, and put out an OP about 100 meters to the west. 3d squad, consolidate from 1 to 3, see that the roads on the north side of the objective are covered, and put an OP on the hilltop at GL134869. I will position the Dragons and machineguns, once on the objective. Reorganize according to SOP. I will inspect at 1215 in your squad areas.

(7) Draw and issue your MREs and ammunition in the assembly area before we leave. Each rifleman will carry an extra bandoleer of ammunition and four grenades. Each squad will carry four AT4s. The aid man will be with the platoon headquarters. The company aid station will remain in the assembly area until the objective is secured. It will then move forward to the east side of the objective, GL137866.

(8) The callsigns and frequencies stay the same. A red star cluster is the emergency signal for shifting supporting fire. I will be behind the lead squad during movement and with the 1st squad during the assault. The time now is 1050. Are there any questions? Let's do it."

c. **Squad Order**. After you finished your order, the squad leaders went back to their squad positions and studied the platoon order. From the information in that order, the squad leaders prepared their orders.

(1) The 1st squad leader is now ready to issue his order to his squad. He uses a terrain model to help explain his order. He begins--

(a) "Listen up, men. This terrain model represents the terrain over which we will attack. (He points to the terrain model and points out features.) This is where we are now. This road is CEDAR ROAD which is the LD. This creek bed is the general direction of our attack to the objective. This is the assault position. This hill is the company's objective. This is the platoon's objective. This is RED ARROW ROAD which runs through the objective. Does everyone understand the terrain model? Okay.

(b) There is an enemy platoon defending the company's objective. The enemy has occupied this hill for about 4 hours. They probably have two-man positions with overhead cover prepared.

(c) Our platoon attacks at 1300 to seize OBJ 1 as part of the company mission, the northern part of the company's objective. 2d squad will attack on our left, and 3d squad will attack on our right.

(d) We attack as part of the platoon at 1300 to seize the center part of the platoon's objective. We must be ready to continue the attack to the west.

(e) We will leave this location at 1245. We will be first in the platoon's order of movement. We will use traveling overwatch with alpha team leading. We will pass through the attack position and cross the LD here. We will continue to follow the creek bed to the platoon release point. At the release point, we will take the northwestern streambed. This is where the platoon will start bounding overwatch. We will continue along this streambed until we reach the assault position. During this movement, there will be a 15-minute artillery preparation on the objective. In the assault, we will be the platoon's base squad. Alpha team will be on the left, and bravo team will be on the right. When the assault starts, we will stay oriented to the southwest about halfway between the hilltop on the left and the road intersection on the right.

(f) Alpha team. You are the base fire team during the assault. Initially during movement, stay about 100 meters out in front.

(g) Bravo team. During the assault, guide on alpha team. Send Jones to the platoon CP. He will be the platoon leader's No. 2 Dragon gunner. Send three men to the platoon CP to draw ammunition and MREs as soon as we finish the order.

(h) For consolidation, 12 o'clock is West. We have from 11 to 1. Alpha team, consolidate from 11 to 12, stay on the west side of the road, and post an OP about

100 meters out to our front (West). I'll give your more guidance on the objective. Bravo team, consolidate from 12 to 1, stay on the west side of the road, and tie in with alpha team on the left. Reorganization will be by SOP. There will be an inspection by the platoon leader at 1215 hours.

(i) MREs and ammunition will be issued here before we leave. Each riflemen will carry an extra bandoleer of ammunition and four grenades. Each team will have two AT4s. The aid man will be with the platoon leader.

(j) A red star cluster is the emergency signal to shift supporting fire. I will be between alpha and bravo teams during movement and assault. The time is now 1130. Are there any questions? Ok, start getting ready."

(k) You will note that both the platoon leader and the squad leader followed the sequence of a five-paragraph OPORD. They discussed the situation, enemy and friendly, mission, execution, including the concept of operation, coordinating instructions, service support, and command and signal instructions. Using the OPORD format enabled the leaders to issue a clear and concise order for the attack.

(2) This concludes the platoon and squad OPORD example. We will now discuss the rifle platoon as the reserve of a company in an attack.

8. Rifle Platoon as Reserve of the Company in an Attack. One rifle platoon may be withheld as the company reserve during an attack. The company commander commits the reserve platoon to best influence the action and to maintain the momentum of the attack. To exploit the success of the other attacking platoons, the reserve platoon should attack the enemy form a new direction. Because of the various missions which the reserve may be assigned, its platoon leader must keep abreast of the tactical situation, know the missions and tactical plans of the other platoons, and be familiar with the terrain and enemy situation in the objective area. The reserve platoon must react quickly and effectively when committed. If your rifle platoon is the company reserve, it may be assigned one or more of the following missions--

a. Protect the flanks or the rear of the company.

b. Maintain contact with adjacent units.

c. Clear a position which has been overrun or bypassed by the attacking platoons.

d. Support the attacking platoons by fire.

e. Assume the mission of an attacking platoon.

f. Attack from a new direction.

g. Protect or assist the consolidation and reorganization on the objective.

h. Guard and evacuate prisoners.

9. **Summary**. This concludes the discussion on the sequence of elements in a five-paragraph operation order. The importance of using standard formats to ensure that all essential information is given to subordinate leaders when an order is issued was stressed. We also discussed the sequence of issuing an OPORD beginning with receipt of the company warning order, performing troop leading procedures and issuing the OPORD. FRAGOs and their use to charge OPORDs were also covered, as well as the use of the tactical SOP to speed up the process of issuing orders. The rifle platoon as reserve of the company in the attack was also covered.

10. **Conclusion**. You should be able to identify the elements of a five-paragraph OPORD, identify the sequence of the elements of a five-paragraph OPORD, how to prepare and issue a platoon five-paragraph oral offensive OPORD and missions for rifle platoon as the reserve of a company in the attack. After reviewing all the material in this lesson, you should complete the practice exercise for lesson one. Answer and feedback for the questions in the practice exercise will be provided to show you where further study is required.

Lesson 1

Practice Exercise

Instructions   The following items will test your understanding of the material covered in this lesson. There is only one correct answer for each item. When you have completed the exercise, check your answers with the answer key that follows. If you answer any item incorrectly, review that part of the lesson which contains the portion involved.

Situation for Questions 1 through 8.

You are a platoon leader. Your unit is preparing to attack. You are performing your troop leading procedures in order to prepare and issue your platoon OPORD.

1. You are explaining combat orders to your squad leaders. You tell them there are generally three kinds of combat orders--

    ○   A. administrative, logistics, combat, and SOP's.
    ○   B. FRAGO, warning orders, and OPLANs.
    ○   C. warning order, OPORD and FRAGO.
    ○   D. OPLAN, OPORD and warning order.

2. The Task Organization of the company OPORD indicates that engineer support will be provided by 3/A/52 Engr (-). The minus sign means that the--

    ○   A. unit is organized under the CAR system.
    ○   B. unit is smaller than a battalion.
    ○   C. unit is less than normal size and denotes detachment of an organic element.
    ○   D. unit is an organic element of the 52d Division.

3. When you inform your men by issuing a platoon order, you should--

    ○   A. base your order on the company order.
    ○   B. issue the company order verbatim.
    ○   C. base your order on the battalion order.
    ○   D. use your knowledge of the situation to develop your order.

4. When you are issuing the enemy forces information from the situation paragraph, you--

    ○   A. cover the exact information in the higher level OPORD situation paragraph.
    ○   B. include actions or activities of the enemy that may affect the platoon mission.
    ○   C. use only the enemy forces information contained in the company FRAGO.
    ○   D. cover most of the information in the company warning order.

5. You are preparing to issue the platoon OPORD and will be unable to issue it from a vantage point near the ground to be attacked. You--

    ○   A. conduct a map reconnaissance with your platoon sergeant and then issue the order.
    ○   B. asked the battalion S-3 to give you a detailed briefing.
    ○   C. use an operation overlay to brief your squad leaders.
    ○   D. use a terrain model.

6. You have just issued your platoon warning order. Your platoon sergeant--

    ○   A. assists you in the issuance of the order.
    ○   B. ensures that your instructions are carried out.
    ○   C. issues the SOP instructions.
    ○   D. issues the warning order to the FO, and the aid man.

7. Due to a change in the situation, you must change your existing platoon OPORD. Your FRAGO should--

    ○   A. address only those elements concerned.
    ○   B. indicate any change in fire support priorities or assets.
    ○   C. follow the specified format.
    ○   D. be detailed and specific.

8. You have been told that your platoon is the company reserve in an attack. Your platoon--

    ○   A. is not expected to support the attacking platoons by fire.
    ○   B. will be committed based on your understanding of the situation.
    ○   C. should plan to attack from the same direction as the lead platoon.
    ○   D. will be committed to best influence the action and maintain the momentum of the attack.

Practice Exercise
Answer Key and Feedback

Situation for Questions 1 through 8.

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    B. FRAGO, warning orders, and OPLANs.

    C. warning order, OPORD and FRAGO.

    D. OPLAN, OPORD and warning order.

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    B. unit is smaller than a battalion.

    C. unit is less than normal size and denotes detachment of an organic element.

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    A. base your order on the company order.

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    D. cover most of the information in the company warning order.

5. You are preparing to issue the platoon OPORD and will be unable to issue it from a vantage point near the ground to be attacked. You--

    A. conduct a map reconnaissance with your platoon sergeant and then issue the order.

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    C. use an operation overlay to brief your squad leaders.

    D. use a terrain model.

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    A. assists you in the issuance of the order.

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    D. will be committed to best influence the action and maintain the momentum of the attack.

LESSON 2

PLAN A DISMOUNTED DAYLIGHT ATTACK FOR AN INFANTRY PLATOON

OVERVIEW

Lesson Description:

In this lesson you will learn to plan a dismounted daylight attack for an infantry platoon.

Terminal Learning Objective:

Action:	Conduct an attack by a platoon.
Condition:	Given the subcourse material for this lesson.
Standard:	The student will demonstrate his comprehension and knowledge by identifying how to conduct an attack by a platoon.
References:	The material contained in this lesson was derived from the following publications:

> FM 7-7J
> FM 7-8
> FM 7-10

INTRODUCTION

An attack is used to destroy or capture an enemy force or to secure key terrain. An attack is conducted in a bold and aggressive manner, usually ending in close combat. Attacks are either hasty or deliberate. The basic difference between a hasty attack and a deliberate attack is the time available for planning and preparation.

Part A

IDENTIFY DOCTRINAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR A DAYLIGHT ATTACK

1. **Platoon Attack Plan**. On receipt of a company attack order, you start your troop-leading procedure, and make an estimate of the situation. Your estimate is a consideration of the mission, enemy, terrain

and weather, and troops and time available (METT-T). Based on this, you develop the attack plan. The attack plan includes a scheme of maneuver and a fire support plan.

a. **Scheme of Maneuver**. This is the positioning and movement of the maneuver element (squad or squads) from the time the platoon crosses the LD through the consolidation on the objective. It includes:

(1) Maneuver element. You decide how many squads are needed in the maneuver element and what each one's mission will be. You also decide how you want each squad to accomplish its mission. Depending on the situation and the support provided by the rest of the company, your platoon's maneuver element may be one, two, or three squads.

(2) Route. You select a route that takes advantage of cover, concealment, and supporting fire. It should direct the attack at the enemy's flank or rear. However, the company commander normally restricts the choice of routes to coincide with his plan for the company.

(3) Formation. You may not be able to select your formation because the platoon may move as part of the company formation.

(a) If it is part of the company formation, the company commander decides on the platoon's formation. He may also decide on its movement technique. If the commander does not tell you what formation and technique to use, you decide based on the platoon's position in the company formation and the likelihood of enemy contact.

(b) If the platoon moves independently, you choose an initial platoon formation and movement technique. You may change these en route. The choice depends on the likelihood of enemy contact, the terrain, visibility, and the speed you want.

(c) If the distance to the objective is great, or if early enemy contact is not expected, the platoon may move in column. Unless enemy action forces it to deploy sooner, the platoon stays in column until it approaches the assault position ([Figure 2-1](#)).
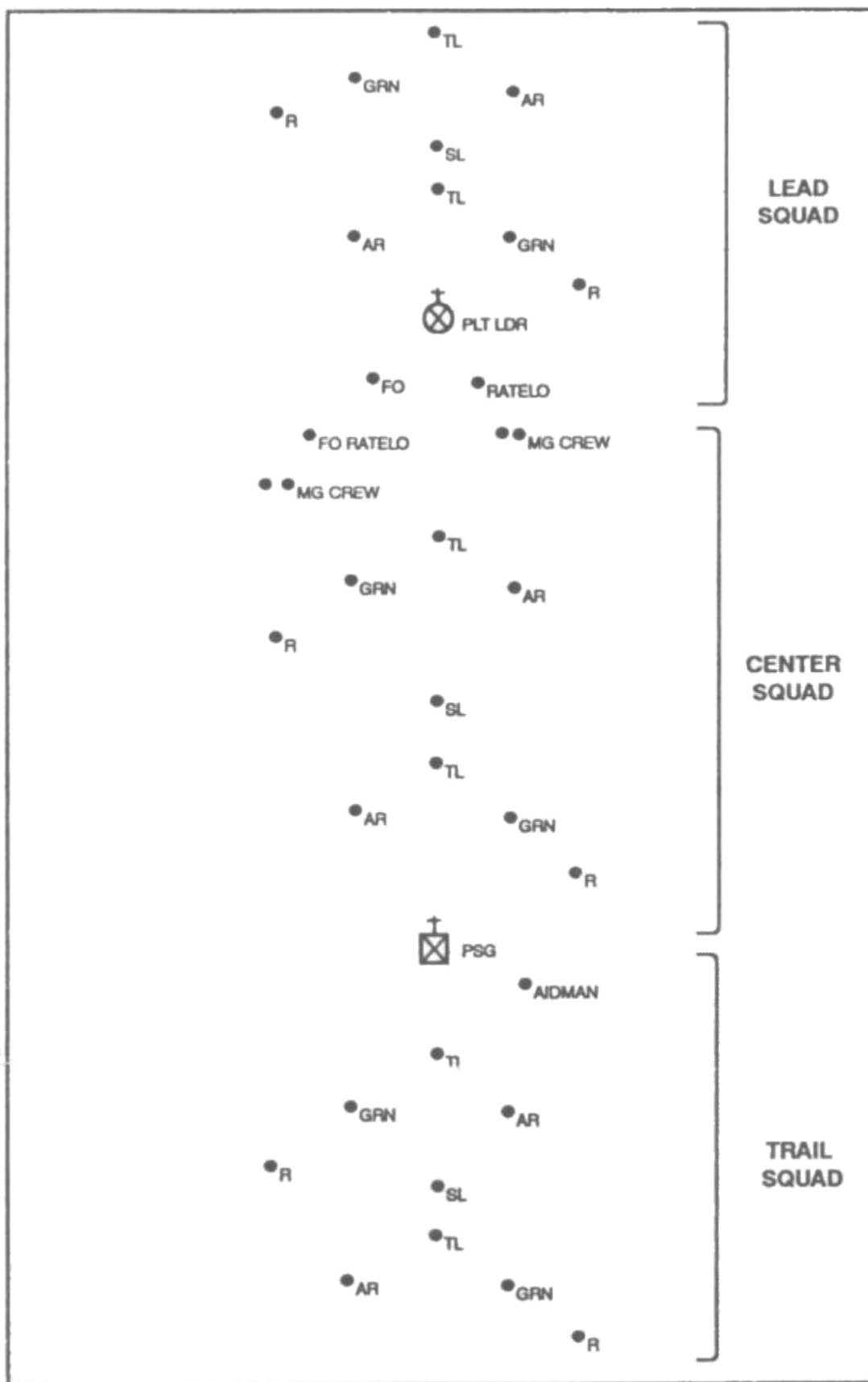
Figure 2-1. Platoon Column.

(d) If the distance to the objective is short, or if early enemy contact is expected, the platoon may move in a platoon line, squads in column ([Figure 2-2](#)).
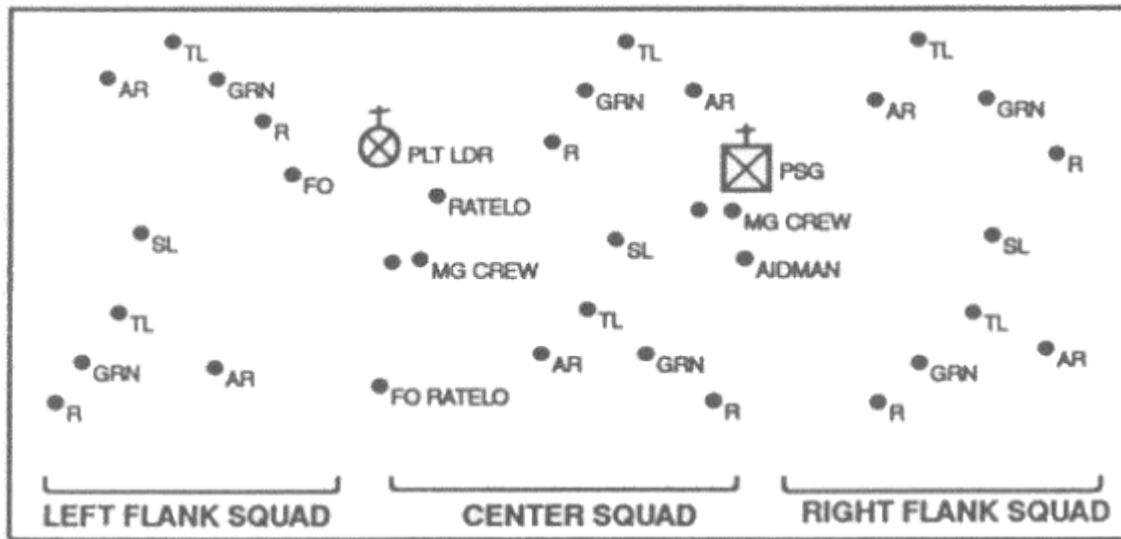

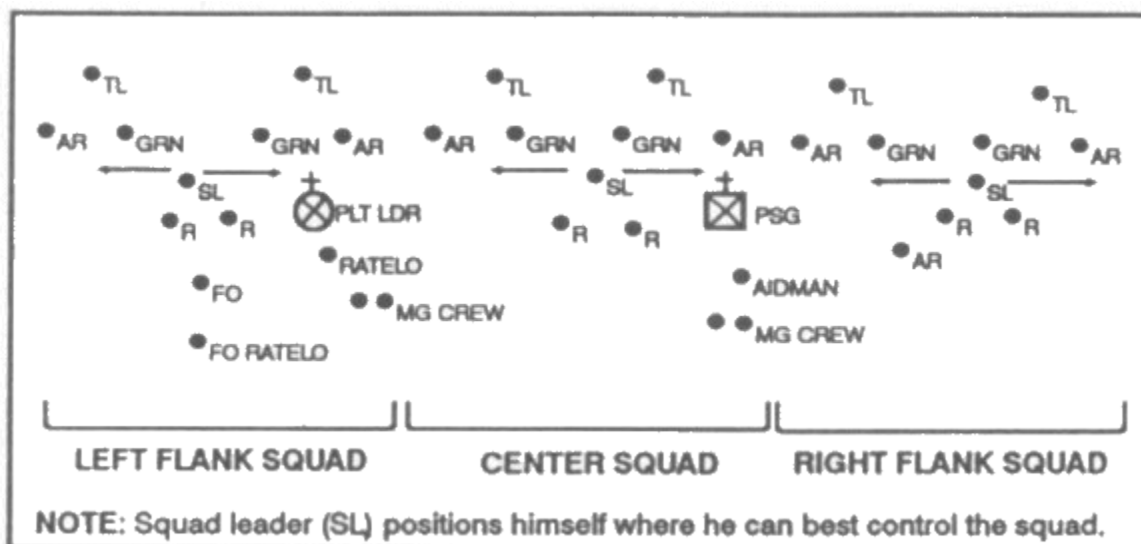**Figure 2-2. Platoon line, squads in column.**

Figure 2-3. Platoon line, squads on line.

(e) If the platoon is in contact with the enemy and the distance to the objective is short, the platoon may move in a platoon line, squads on line ([Figure 2-3](#)).

b. **Control**. Based on the scheme of maneuver, you select:

(1) A position within the formation from which you can control the entire platoon.

(2) Control measures needed to control the operation.

(3) A means to communicate with the squad leaders (voice commands, arm-and-hand signals, whistles, radios, flares, or smoke grenades or pyrotechnics).

2. **Consolidation and Reorganization**. Consolidation and reorganization are the actions a platoon takes once the objective is seized.

a. **Consolidation**. This is the organizing and positioning of men, squads, and weapons on a newly seized objective, so that it can be defended against a counterattack. The company commander assigns a part of the company's objective to each platoon to consolidate. He may use coordinating points to help the platoons tie in with each other.

(1) You must plan the required consolidation of the objective, and include the plan in your order to the squad leaders. The plan may be changed as the situation requires, but it must be complete and as detailed as possible. In the offense you organize and strengthen a newly captured position to secure it against a counterattack. The plan for consolidation include areas of responsibility for the squads and the positions and missions of weapons.

(2) Upon seizing the objective, the platoon assumes a hasty defensive posture to prevent a successful enemy counterattack. Two-man security elements are immediately sent out to observe along the most likely avenues of approach. Their primary purpose is to provide early warning. If possible, they try to determine the direction in which the enemy has withdrawn and his activities.

(3) The objective may be consolidated using either the terrain or clock method:

(a) With the terrain method, you designate a certain section of the objective for each squad to occupy, using specific terrain features (for example, trees, rocks, or ditches). The selection of squad positions may be based upon principal avenues of approach. In the terrain feature method, each squad is given two easily identifiable terrain features as the right and left limits of its sector, and ensures mutual support for adjacent units (Figure 2-4).
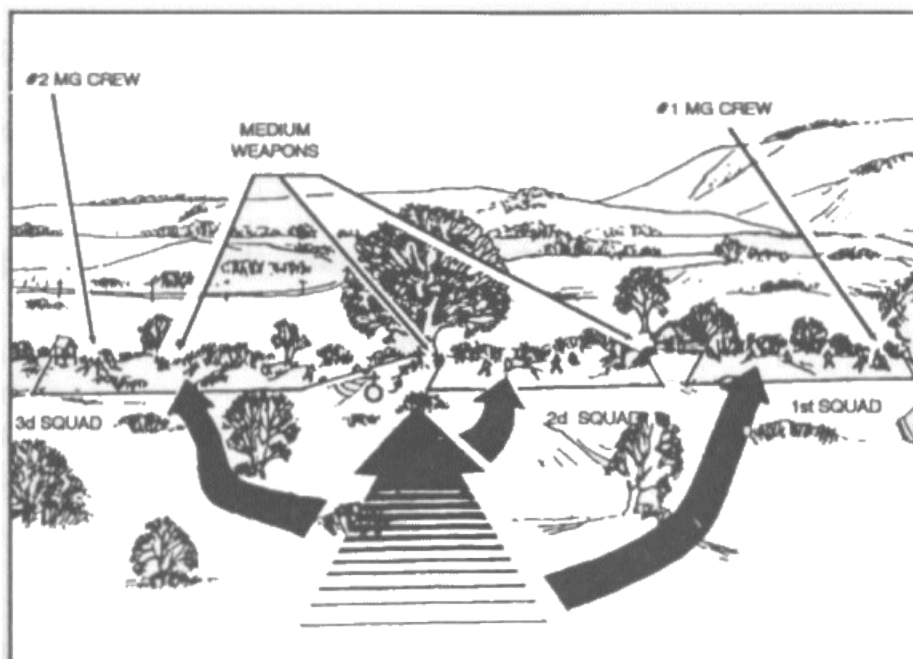

Figure 2-4. Terrain Feature Method.

(b) With the clock method, first designate the direction of attack as 12 o'clock. Then, assign each squad a portion of the clock. In the clock method, 12 o'clock is either a compass direction or the direction of attack (Figure 2-5).
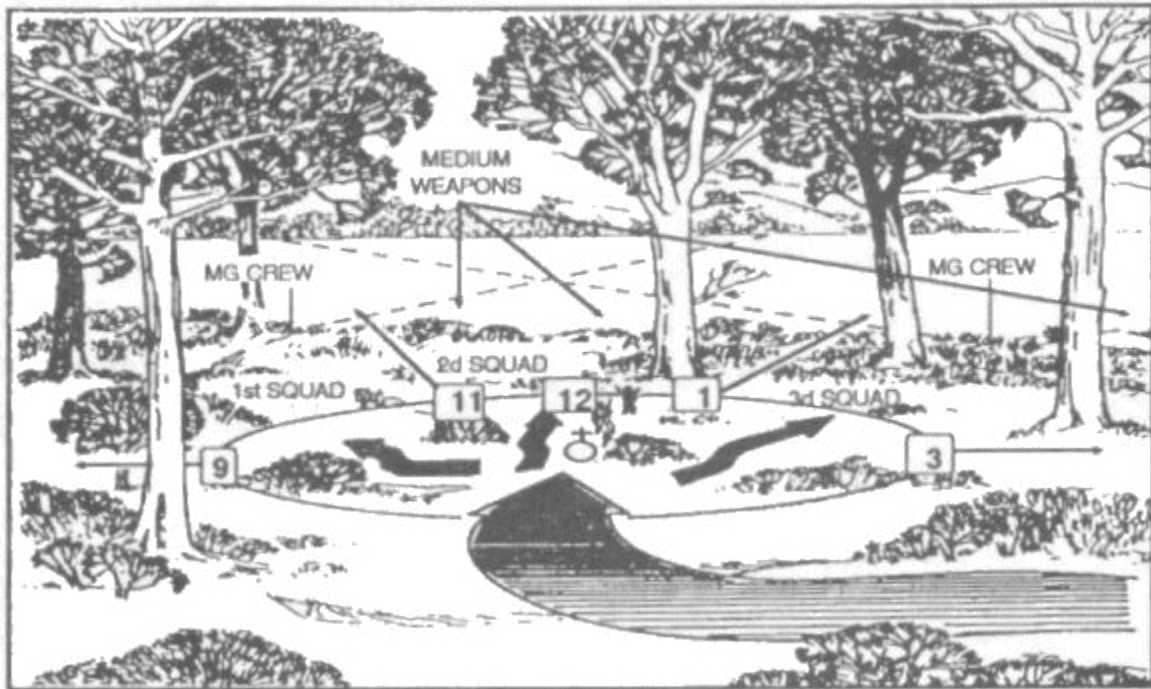

Figure 2-5. Clock Method.

(4) You want to keep pressure on the withdrawing enemy with continuous indirect fire on his last known or suspected positions or rally points.

(5) Ensure that positions are prepared as necessary to repel counterattack and increase survivability against indirect fires.

(6) During consolidation--

(a) Send out OPs and security patrols as directed by the company commander.

(b) Gunners quickly move machine-guns and Dragons forward and position them to cover likely routes of enemy counterattack.

(c) Squad and fire team leaders position their men and assign sectors of fire.

(d) Troops start to prepare fighting positions.

b. **Reorganization**. Reorganization is the restoration of order within the unit and the preparation of the unit for further combat. Reorganization of the platoon should be done IAW the SOP. During reorganization--

(1) Reestablish the chain of command. Fill all key positions from the remaining platoon members, and ensure that all members are made aware of the new chain of command.

(2) Evacuate the dead and seriously wounded. Ensure all positions remain mutually supporting. Check all sectors of fire after the casualties are evacuated to ensure the sectors remain covered. If necessary, shift positions or reassign sectors to cover the gaps.

(3) Redistribute or resupply ammunition and weapons. Ensure the squad leaders pass out additional ammunition, if available, or divide the remainder to suit the situation. Take a quick inventory and request a resupply, if required.

(4) Ensure all EPW, enemy material, and information are collected and reported, and that the EPWs and material are evacuated, if possible.

(5) Ensure all crew served weapons are manned and positioned on likely enemy avenues of approach.

(6) Give the team or company commander a situation report (SITREP) that includes the tactical situation, personnel strength, status of ammunition, and enemy strengths and captured documents.

3. **Fire Support Plan**. This plan supports and complements the scheme of maneuver and is developed concurrently. It includes the use of all available direct and indirect fire. The purpose of this fire is to kill as many enemies as possible and to suppress the rest to keep them from seeing or shooting while the maneuver element closes on the objective.

a. Indirect fire is mainly planned by the company commander and fire support team (FIST) chief. However, you and your FO may plan for and request additional targets if necessary. A detailed discussion of indirect fire is in Part D of this lesson.

b. You are primarily concerned with planning the direct fire of your fire element. The fire element may consist of the machine guns and Dragons, or it may consist of one or two squads and these weapons. The fire elements composition depends on support provided by other platoons and how much direct fire support you feel is necessary for the mission.

(1) Machine guns. You initially employ the machine guns in one of three ways:

(a) Position both guns on or near the line of departure (LD). This is done when the objective and route to it can be seen and covered by fire from a position on or near the LD.

(b) Position one machine gun on or near the LD and have one go with the maneuver element.

● The objective can be seen and covered by fire from the LD but only part of the route can be seen.

● All of the route can be seen from the LD but the objective cannot be seen or is out of range.

(c) Have both machine guns go with the maneuver element. This is done when neither the objective nor the route can be covered from the LD.

(2) If you select the first or second method, you must decide how, where, and when the machine gun(s) will displace. You should have one machine gun in position to fire while the other is displacing.

(3) If the machine guns are with the fire element during the maneuver element's assault on the objective, they must displace forward as soon as their fire is masked by the maneuver element.

(4) When machine guns go with the maneuver element, you look for places to position them along the route where they can cover the movement to, and the assault on, the objective.

4. **Dragons**. You have basically the same three options in employing the Dragons as you have in employing the machine guns. However, when possible, you should position them with the fire element. Dragons should not go with the maneuver element in the assault because of the weapon's size and weight, and because of the need for the gunner to be still while tracking.

5. **Squads**.

a. You may put one or more rifle squads in the fire element to provide more direct fire support and security for the machine guns and Dragons.

b. You must be aware that even when planning for a hasty attack, the plan will include a scheme of maneuver and fire support plan. The shortage of time, however, will cause the attack plan to be in less detail. Remember, the less squads and weapons have to be maneuvered, the easier the coordinating and control.

6. **Conduct of the Attack**. The following portrayal of the conduct of an attack will give you an idea of how an attack plan is implemented.

a. As the platoon leader, you move where you can best influence the fight. This may be with one of the assault squads or at the center rear of the platoon. To communicate, you may use one or more of these means: voice commands, arm-and-hand signals, whistles, radios, flares, or smoke grenades or pyrotechnics.

(1) **Movement from Assembly Area to Line of Departure**. Your platoon moves forward from the assembly area under company control. When you are already forward with the company commander, your platoon sergeant moves the platoon forward. Machine guns and Dragons may precede the rest of the platoon by moving to overwatch positions on or near the LD. The move from the assembly area is timed beforehand so the lead squad crosses the LD at the time of the attack without halting in the attack position. If the platoon must halt in the attack position, it deploys into the initial attack formation, posts security, and takes care of last minute coordination. Whether or not the platoon halts in the attack position, it must deploy into the attack formation and fix bayonets before crossing the LD.

(2) **Movement from Line of Departure to the Assault Position**. The platoon's maneuver element moves from the LD to the assault position, making the best use of cover, concealment, smoke, and supporting fire.

(a) The fire element overwatches from positions that best support the advance of the maneuver element. The fire element leader (platoon sergeant or squad leader of a squad with the fire element) controls the method and rate of fire. He gives the command to open fire. This leader and the gunners watch the progress of the maneuver element and shoot targets which threaten it. When machine guns are close together, the leader must anticipate the masking of their fire and displace the guns one at a time. When the guns are separated, each crew may displace under control of its gunner when its fire is masked, or when it can no longer support. The displacement of all weapons in the fire element must be timed so that the platoon has continuous fire support.

(b) If the platoon is hit by indirect fire en route, it moves quickly out of or around the impact area.

(c) If enemy resistance is met short of the objective, fire is returned at once by those squads in position to fire. You have your FO call for and adjust indirect fire on the enemy. Depending on the place and type of the resistance, and the company plan, the platoon may be ordered to bypass enemy troops who cannot affect the accomplishment of the mission. The locations of all bypassed enemy are reported to the company commander.

(d) If enemy resistance cannot be bypassed, the platoon should use aggressive fire and movement against it. When resistance is first met, the lead squad returns fire at once. The leader must take prompt action. Because you are well forward, you can see the action of your lead squad(s). You must quickly consider the mission, enemy, terrain and weather, and troops and time available (METT-T), and make a plan. You give commands or signals to carry out your plan. You should not commit squads piecemeal. Coordinate actions so the platoon will hit the enemy with its full combat power. You should try to maneuver a squad to strike the flank or rear of the enemy position. When the resistance is destroyed, the platoon continues quickly toward its objective.

(e) Obstacles encountered along the route are breached if possible. If not, they are bypassed. You must decide how best to overcome the obstacle without losing the momentum of the attack. The commander is told of obstacles that may affect units following the platoon.

(3) **Movement from the Assault Position to the Objective**. The assault position is as close to the objective as possible without risking needless exposure to enemy fire.

(a) As the platoon nears the assault position, the FO may increase the volume of indirect fire on the objective. Fire from the fire element also increases. The platoon is deployed on line just prior to reaching the assault position. It should then pass through the assault position and assault the objective. Sometimes, a

platoon may halt so that deployment can be completed and all its squads assault at once. The platoon should avoid halting in the assault position, if possible. Halting is dangerous and may cause loss of momentum.

(b) Supporting fire continues to hit the enemy. The assaulting troops and the fire element keep up a high rate of fire to keep the enemy suppressed. Indirect fire is normally shifted by the company commander when it endangers the advancing troops. The commander coordinates this with the assault of his platoons. He is helped in this control by reports or signals from his platoon leaders and by his own observation of the attack. As the fire of the platoon's fire element is masked, you must shift it or displace the weapons.

b. In closing with the enemy, the men move by fire and movement. They move singly, by pairs, by fire team, by squad, or by a combination of these methods. They use all the cover they can. As they close, men must fire aimed or well-directed shots to suppress the enemy. This is continued until they can close with and kill or capture him. Automatic rifles are fired in short bursts, across the squad front. Rifles, grenade launchers, hand grenades, bayonets, and machine guns are used to overcome pockets of resistance.

c. All leaders strive to get a heavy volume of accurate fire on the objective. They must make their men move forward aggressively. As the noise and confusion of battle make control by voice difficult, leaders may move to critical points of action to make sure their commands are understood and carried out. They see that men do not waste ammunition in the assault by indiscriminate firing.

d. Assaulting troops, having closed with the enemy, clear the enemy positions and move over the objective far enough to shoot at any withdrawing troops. They are then moved quickly to their positions for consolidation so as to be ready if a counterattack comes.

(1) Platoons must be prepared to repel a counterattack or to resume the attack after the objective is seized.

(2) To help coordinate and control the assault of two or more platoons, the company commander may designate a base platoon. The platoon in turn designates a base squad. Platoons guide on the company's base platoon. Squads guide on the platoon's base squad. The base squad leader designates a base fire team in his squad.

7. **Summary**. This concludes the discussions on planning a dismounted daylight attack for an infantry platoon. This part of the subcourse covered preparation of the platoon attack plan, including the scheme of maneuver and the fire support plan; consolidation and reorganization once the objective is seized; and conduct of the attack by an infantry platoon. We will now discuss the offensive control measures which are used to regulate a unit's movement, positions and fire.

Part B

OFFENSIVE CONTROL MEASURES

1. **General**. Control measures are methods or devices that you use to regulate or direct your unit's movement, positions, and fire. Control measures can be drawn on a map, overlay, or sketch, or shown on a terrain model. Control measures must be related to terrain features which are easy to recognize. You should use only those control measures needed to control the operation. Offensive control measures are--

   a. **Assembly Area**. An area occupied by a unit when it is preparing for future operations. It should be on easily defensible terrain. An all-round defense is prepared within the time available. Desirable characteristics are concealment, room for dispersion, good routes forward, and security from ground or air attack. While your unit is in this area, these activities may take place--

      (1) Orders are issued.

      (2) The unit is organized for its mission.

      (3) Maintenance is done.

      (4) Inspections are done.

      (5) The unit is resupplied.

      (6) The unit rehearses.

      (7) The unit rests.

   b. **Attack Position**. The last position occupied or passed through by the assault echelon before crossing the line of departure (LD).

   c. **Line of Departure**. A line designated to coordinate the commitment of attacking units or scouting elements at a specified time. A start time.

   d. **Direction of Attack**. A specific direction or route that the main attack or the main body of the force will follow. If used, it is normally a battalion and lower level. Direction of attack is a more restrictive control measure than axis of advance, and units are not free to maneuver off the assigned route. It usually is associated with infantry units conducting night attacks, or units involved in limited visibility operations, and in counterattacks.

   e. **Boundaries**. A control measure normally drawn along identifiable terrain features and used to delineate areas of tactical responsibility for subordinate units. Within their boundaries, units may maneuver within the overall plan without close coordination with neighboring units unless otherwise restricted. Direct fire may be placed across boundaries on clearly identified enemy targets without prior coordination, provided friendly forces are not endangered. Indirect fire also may used after prior coordination.

f. **Route**. The prescribed course to be traveled from a specific point of origin to a specific destination.

g. **Axis of Advance**. A general route of advance, assigned for purposes of control, which extends towards the enemy. An axis of advance symbol graphically portrays a commander's intentions, such as avoidance of built-up areas or envelopment of an enemy force. It allows terrain suitable for the size of the force assigned the axis and often a road, a group of roads, or a designated series of locations. A commander may maneuver his force and supporting fires to either side of an axis of advance provided the unit remains oriented on the axis and the objective. Deviations from an assigned axis of advance must not interfere with the maneuver of adjacent units without prior approval of the higher commander. Enemy forces that do not threaten security or jeopardize mission accomplishment may be bypassed. An axis of advance is not used to direct the control of terrain or the clearance of enemy forces from a specific location. Intermediate objectives normally are assigned for these purposes.

h. **Phase Line**. A phase line is used for control and coordination of military operations. It is usually a recognizable terrain feature extending across the zone of action. Units normally report crossing PLs, but do not halt unless specifically directed. PLs often are used to prescribe the timing of delay operations.

i. **Checkpoint**. A predetermined point on the ground used as a means of coordinating friendly movement. Checkpoints are not used to report as reference points in reporting enemy locations.

j. **Assault Position**. That position between the line of departure (LD) and the objective in an attack from which forces assault the objective. Ideally, it is the last covered and concealed position before reaching the objective (primarily used by dismounted infantry).

k. **Objective**. The physical object of the action taken (for example, a definite terrain feature the seizure and/or holding of which is essential to the commander's plan, or, the destruction of an enemy force without regard to terrain features). The principle of war which states that every military operation should be directed towards clearly defined, decisive, and attainable objectives.

l. **Contact point**. A designated, easily identifiable point on the terrain where two or more units are required to physically meet.

m. **Rally point**. An easily identifiable point on the ground at which units can reassemble/reorganize if they become disbursed.

2. **Limited Visibility Control Measures**. Your platoon may attack at night and during other periods of limited visibility. Darkness is just one condition that reduces a soldier's ability to see. Smoke, fog, dust, and heavy rain or snow also limit visibility. When visibility is poor, the following control measures may be used in addition to, or instead of, some of those above. The degree of visibility will determine which of these measures are necessary.

a. **Point of departure**. In night attacks, a specific place on the line of departure (LD) where units will cross.

b. **Probable Line of Deployment**. A line previously selected on the ground where attacking units deploy prior to beginning an assault. Platoons may use guides to provide better control during limited visibility.

c. **Limit of Advance**. An easily recognized terrain feature beyond which attacking elements will not advance.

d. **Infiltration Lane**. A lane through which a unit moves by stealth in order to pass through lines without being detected. An infiltrating unit must stay within the limits of the lane.

3. **Summary**. This concludes the discussions of offensive tactical control measures. The methods and devices leaders use to regulate and direct this unit's movement were covered. Control measures which are used during limited visibility were also covered. It must be remembered that a leader should only use those control measures needed to control the operation.

Part C

PLANNING AN OFFENSIVE SCHEME OF MANEUVER

1. **General**. When your platoon or a squad makes contact with the enemy, the movement technique stops, and fire and movement begins. However, it should be recognized that fire and movement are an extension of bounding overwatch.

a. Your platoon will conduct fire and movement to close with and destroy the enemy, to learn more of his strength and disposition, or to move away from him.

b. When your platoon is conducting fire and maneuver, both actions will be taking place at the same time. For example, one of your fire elements will direct fire at the enemy to cover the move of a maneuver element. At the same time, a maneuver element will move either to close with the enemy, or to a better position from which to shoot at him. Depending on the distance to the enemy positions and the availability of cover, the fire element and the maneuver element switch roles as needed to keep moving. Before the maneuver element moves beyond supporting range of the fire element, it takes a position from which it can shoot at the enemy. When this happens, the fire element becomes the maneuver element for the next move.

c. An element may be one of your soldiers, a fire team, a squad, or a entire platoon. Fire and movement means an element supporting by fire, while an element moves/maneuvers. The element also uses its fire to accomplish its move. The size of the elements is not the determining factor in whether it is fire and movement.

d. When contact is made, leaders must designate both fire elements and maneuver elements.

e. The best position for your fire element is on high ground that is to the flank of the maneuver element. By choosing this type location, the fire of the fire element will not be masked by the maneuver element until the last moment. You should make every attempt to move your fire element into a firing position undetected.

f. Once the fire element is in position, it should place suppressive fire on the enemy. You will know if the suppressive fire is effective if the enemy is pinned down and cannot return fire. Once this happens, you can reduce the rate of fire, but suppression must be continued. When your maneuver element nears its objective, you will want to increase the rate of fire. You continue to fire and move until enemy resistance ceases.

2. **Fire**. When your platoon is engaged in fire and movement, some of your fire support may come from artillery, mortars, and TOWs. However, you must realize that most of a platoon's fire support is from its rifles, machineguns, grenade launchers, and Dragons. When your rifle platoon moves toward its objective with its rifle squads alternately firing and moving by switching roles as fire element and maneuver element your machine guns and Dragons will be part of the fire element. These weapons may be moved from position to position, joining each element as it becomes the fire element.

a. You have the option of advancing your rifle platoon by fire and maneuver using the same element to maneuver all the way to the objective. Depending on the situation you may decide to use the platoon's machine guns and Dragons as the fire element, or you may use one or two squads and these weapons. As mentioned earlier it is the actions taken (fire or maneuver), not the size of the element, which determines its mission. You may give control of the fire element to your platoon sergeant or a rifle squad leader in the fire element. You should go with the maneuver element.

b. As the maneuver element gets in and among enemy positions, there is a danger that it may mask the fire from the fire element. Your gunners should then slowly "walk" (move) their fire across the objective just in front of the maneuver element, or shift to another target. Once they cease fire, you can have them move forward to join in the reorganization and consolidation, or in a continuation of the attack.

3. **Maneuver**. During maneuver your squad and team leaders control and lead their men by example, by voice command, by arm-and-hand signals, or by other visual or sound (whistle) signals. Their men move by the best method for the situation. How members of a rifle team move depend on the intensity of enemy fire. This may be by crawling or by short rushes from cover to cover. When an assault is conducted it must be aggressive so the platoon does not slow down as the men close with the enemy. As it fights its way through the objective, the platoon must avoid exposure to enemy fire from behind or to the flanks of the objective.

a. The crawl is slow but it helps avoid exposure to fire. If necessary, a squad will crawl all the way through its objective.

b. Short rushes from cover to cover may be used when enemy fire allows brief exposure. Men rush singly, in pairs, or by fire teams in 3- to 5-second rushes. A rush is kept short to keep the enemy machine gunners from tracking rushing men. Men should not hit the ground in the open just because they have been up for 5 seconds. They must look for cover before starting the rush and then head straight to the new position.

c. Single rush. At times, a whole platoon may have to assault an enemy position in a single, quick rush.

(1) This is done only when--

      (a) A platoon is under heavy indirect fire.

      (b) There is no cover.

      (c) A platoon is being hit by hand grenades.

      (d) The enemy who could shoot at it is suppressed.

(2) This type rush must be fast, accompanied by suppressive fire. A rush must be for a distance so short that the enemy can be quickly overrun.

4. **Summary**. This concludes the fire and movement discussions. We covered the fire element and the maneuver element, the platoon advancing by fire, and methods of the maneuver element can use to move. We will now move to fire support planning for an offensive operation.

Part D

PLANNING FIRE SUPPORT FOR AN OFFENSIVE OPERATION

1. **General**. Your infantry platoon may be supported by many weapons not organic to it. Usually, a platoon can expect support from the company's TOWs and mortars, from the battalion's TOWs and mortars, and from a field artillery unit. An infantry battalion normally has 105-mm howitzers or other field artillery in direct support. There may be tanks attached to the company that can support the platoon. Air Force aircraft may at times add more fire support. Leaders must be able to get the fire of these weapons "on target."

2. **Planning Indirect Fire**. Each rifle company has a fire support team (FIST) working with it. The FIST helps the company commander plan, call for, and adjust indirect fire. Normally, a platoon will have a FO team (an FO and a RATELO) supporting it. This team helps you plan and use your supporting fire. The team calls for and adjusts indirect fire. It moves with you.

    a. When you develop a scheme of maneuver, you must plan fire to support it. Some targets are planned by company and battalion commanders, but you must determine what, if any, additional targets you want planned to support your platoon.

    b. The plan should include fire on known, suspected, or likely enemy positions and on prominent terrain features. A planned target can be used as a reference point for quickly getting fire on targets of opportunity. Except for specific point targets, there is no need to plot targets closer together than 400 meters. Closer plotting than that would complicate the fire plan and would not necessarily make fire more responsive. Targets are numbered and recorded. Targets planned for direct fire weapons such as machine guns, Dragons, tanks, and TOWs are called TRPs. They are assigned target numbers by the FO just like other targets.

    c. In the offense, to keep the enemy from reinforcing and to protect the unit from counterattack, you and the FO plan--

(1) Targets on the approaches short of the objective.

(2) Targets on the objective.

(3) Targets beyond and to the flanks of the objective.

3. **Company Fire Planning**. In all operations, the company commander must plan the employment of his direct fire units and weapons, and how he will support them by indirect fire. When planning the commander is assisted by his fire support team (FIST) chief, and rifle platoon leaders. The commander initiates fire planning by giving them his concept of the operation (which includes his scheme of maneuver or the positioning of units) and his guidance as to fire needs. This includes the support he has been allocated by the battalion commander.

4. **Fire Planning for the Offense**. In the offense, the commander considers METT-T and then decides on a scheme of maneuver. In doing so, he decides how he will maneuver his platoons and weapons to the objective. He also selects positions along the route to the objective from which overwatch elements can cover the movement of the company. If a fire element is to be used during the assault, he selects a position from which it will support the maneuver element.

a. Once the scheme of maneuver has been determined, the commander, along with the FIST chief and platoon leaders, plans indirect fire to support it. Based on the commander's guidance, the FIST chief develops a target list with input from the platoon leaders and their FOs. Targets are personnel, materiel (including vehicles), fortifications, or terrain features that warrant engagement.

b. The FIST chief plans targets on known, suspected, and likely enemy locations along the route to the objective. He also plans targets on the objective and to its flanks and rear. Likely enemy locations are determined from a map and terrain study and knowledge of the enemy.

c. When there are few, if any, known or likely locations, fire is planned on prominent terrain features (known points) so that targets of opportunity that do appear can be engaged by a shift from a known point. Prominent terrain features must be readily identifiable on the map and on the ground. The number of these targets should be kept small.

d. There are four types of targets for which the FIST chief may plan. They are scheduled targets, on-call targets, priority targets, and targets of opportunity.

(1) A scheduled target is planned to be hit at a set time. The time is stated as so many minutes before or after a specified time or event.

(2) An on-call target is planned to be hit on request rather than at a set time.

(3) A priority target is an oncall target which a maneuver unit commander feels is critical to his unit and must be fired upon as rapidly as possible (once called for).

(4) A target of opportunity is an unplanned target which appears unexpectedly. Since such targets may be fleeting, they should be hit quickly.

e. In addition to the normal engagement of targets, the FIST chief may plan for special types of supporting fire. This may include preparation fire and screening fire.

(1) A preparation is an intense volume of indirect fire scheduled to support an attack. It usually starts at a specified time in relation to the attack time, and may continue beyond that time. It may start at a set time or be on-call when needed. Mortars seldom fire a preparation, as it expends a large amount of ammunition.

(2) A smokescreen is used to hide friendly units from the enemy. Typical offensive uses of smokescreens are to screen a river crossing, to screen a unit's consolidation of an objective, and to screen any other type movements. High explosive (HE) rounds may be fired in a smoke area (not used by friendly troops) so that the enemy cannot use the smoke to hide his movements.

f. Once the target list is complete and approved by the company commander it is forwarded by the most secure means available to the battalion fire support officer (FSO), platoon leaders and FOs, and the company mortar fire direction center (FDC).

NOTE

To assist the company commander in visualizing the indirect fire coverage of the area, the FIST chief may prepare an overlay for him.

g. The battalion (FSO) reviews and consolidates the target lists from the companies, resolves duplications of targets, and assigns a target number to each target. A target number is an alphanumeric designator consisting of two letters and four numbers.

h. After consolidating the target lists, the FSO sends copies of the battalion consolidated target list to the mortar FDC, direct support artillery battalion FDC, and the company commanders and FIST chiefs. Each FIST chief then disseminates the target numbers (and any changes to his company's original target list) to the platoon leaders and FOs, and to the company mortar FDC.

i. After receiving the company fire plan, you check it to insure that targets are planned on all known or suspected enemy positions in front of, on, behind, and to the flanks of the objective. If additional targets are required, your FO coordinates them with FIST chief.

j. Other fire may come from Air Force aircraft and air defense weapons. This support is planned and controlled by the company or battalion commander. You may request it if needed.

5. **Summary**. This completes lesson two. You should know how to identify the doctrinal considerations for a daylight attack; identify control measures; plan an offensive scheme of maneuver, and how to plan fire support for an offense operation. After reviewing all the material in this lesson, you should complete the practice exercise for lesson two. Answers and feedback for the questions in the practice exercise will be provided to show you where further study is required.

Lesson 2

Practice Exercise

Instructions   The following items will test your understanding of the material covered in this lesson. There is only one correct answer for each item. When you have completed the exercise, check your answers with the answer key that follows. If you answer any item incorrectly, review that part of the lesson which contains the portion involved.

Situation for Questions 1 through 7.

You are a platoon leader. You have just received the company warning order for a dismounted daylight attack, you are making plans and preparing to issue your OPORD.

1. You are selecting the platoon's maneuver element. You--

    ○   A. select the element based on the platoon's position in the company formation.
    ○   B. decide based on the likelihood of enemy contact.
    ○   C. may use one, two or three squads, depending on the situation and support provided by the rest of the company.
    ○   D. base your decision on the distance to the objective and the likelihood of enemy contact.

2. You are briefing your squad leaders on consolidation actions. You tell them their first step in consolidation after seizing the objective is to--

    ○   A. assume a hasty defensive posture.
    ○   B. resupply or redistribute ammunition.
    ○   C. collect, report, and evacuate EPW.
    ○   D. consolidate using the clock method.

3. You are determining what actions you can take as you move along the axis of advance. You--

    ○   A. must follow it to get from one location to another.
    ○   B. know it is a specific route you must follow.
    ○   C. use it to coordinate lifting and shifting of fires.
    ○   D. may maneuver to either side as long as it does not interfere with adjacent units.

4. You are briefing your squad leaders on fire and movement. You tell them that depending on the distance to enemy positions and availability of cover, they--

   ○ A. should plan on changing movement techniques.
   ○ B. should be prepared for the fire element and maneuver element to switch roles as needed.
   ○ C. must be prepared to use the traveling overwatch technique once enemy contact is made.
   ○ D. will use fire and movement at different times.

5. You are briefing your squad leaders on the best methods for the maneuver element to move. You explain that a single rush is--

   ○ A. used when the enemy who could shoot at the platoon is not suppressed.
   ○ B. allows brief exposure to enemy fire.
   ○ C. used when the platoon is under heavy indirect fire.
   ○ D. used when there is good cover.

6. You are planning offensive indirect fire support. To keep the enemy from reinforcing and to protect your platoon from counterattack, you

   ○ A. plot target 300 meters apart.
   ○ B. plan targets on approaches short of the objective, on the objective, and beyond and to the flanks of the objective.
   ○ C. plan targets on enemy avenues of approach; on obstacles; and on, behind, and to the flanks of friendly positions.
   ○ D. plan final protective fire where it will break up enemy assaults on the position.

7. Your company commander initiates fire planning by--

   ○ A. tasking his FIST chief to develop the fire plan.
   ○ B. meeting with his FIST chief and the FSO to determine what indirect fire assets are available for use.
   ○ C. giving the FIST chief, and rifle platoon leaders his concept of the operation.
   ○ D. reviewing the battalion commander's concept of the operation and giving guidance to his FIST chief.

Practice Exercise
Answer Key and Feedback

Situation for Questions 1 through 7.

You are a platoon leader. You have just received the company warning order for a dismounted daylight attack, you are making plans and preparing to issue your OPORD.

1. You are selecting the platoon's maneuver element. You--

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   D. base your decision on the distance to the objective and the likelihood of enemy contact.

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   C. collect, report, and evacuate EPW.

   D. consolidate using the clock method.

3. You are determining what actions you can take as you move along the axis of advance. You--

   A. must follow it to get from one location to another.

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   C. use it to coordinate lifting and shifting of fires.

   D. may maneuver to either side as long as it does not interfere with adjacent units.

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   B. should be prepared for the fire element and maneuver element to switch roles as needed.
   C. must be prepared to use the traveling overwatch technique once enemy contact is made.
   D. will use fire and movement at different times.

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    C. used when the platoon is under heavy indirect fire.

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    A. plot target 300 meters apart.

    B. plan targets on approaches short of the objective, on the objective, and beyond and to the flanks of the objective.
    C. plan targets on enemy avenues of approach; on obstacles; and on, behind, and to the flanks of friendly positions.
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    A. tasking his FIST chief to develop the fire plan.

    B. meeting with his FIST chief and the FSO to determine what indirect fire assets are available for use.
    C. giving the FIST chief, and rifle platoon leaders his concept of the operation.
    D. reviewing the battalion commander's concept of the operation and giving guidance to his FIST chief.

LESSON 3

PLANNING CONSIDERATION FOR THE CONDUCT OF A LIMITED VISIBILITY ATTACK

OVERVIEW

Lesson Description:

Planning considerations for a limited visibility platoon attack.

Terminal Learning Objective:

Action:	Identify the planning considerations for the conduct of a limited visibility attack.
Condition:	Given the subcourse material contained in this lesson.
Standard:	The student will demonstrate his comprehension and knowledge by identifying the doctrinal, tactical, considerations, and planning for the conduct of a limited visibility attack for an infantry platoon (offense).
Reference:	The material contained in this lesson was derived from the following publications:
	[FM 7-8](#) 1992

Part A

DOCTRINAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR A LIMITED VISIBILITY ATTACK

1. **General**. Platoons may attack at night and during other periods of limited visibility as a part of a company. This is done to gain surprise, to press the enemy, to exploit the success of daylight operations, or to avoid heavy losses by using limited visibility as concealment.

a. Darkness is just one condition that reduces the soldier's ability to see. Smoke, fog, dust, and heavy rain or snow also limit visibility. This part discusses the night attack, but the techniques (with slight modifications) apply to attacks at times when visibility is reduced by other conditions.

b. A night attack may be non-illuminated or illuminated. In either case, illumination must always be planned. The attack may start non-illuminated and end illuminated. The company commander or battalion commander will normally decide which method to use or when to illuminate. Sources of illumination may be ground-fired flares, grenade launcher illuminating

rounds, mortar and field artillery illuminating rounds, or aircraft flares. Night sights and night vision devices should be used to ease movement and control.

c. Tactics for the illuminated attack are about the same as for the daylight attack.

d. We will now discuss the non-illuminated attack by stealth. You as the attacker tries to get as close to the enemy as you can without being detected. You try to surprise the enemy with the assault. In order to do this, leaders must have detailed intelligence about the enemy. They must know the terrain, conduct detailed planning, and conduct several rehearsals of the attack. Preparations may take up to several days. Conditions may exist in which the attack can be made by stealth to a point and then illumination used the rest of the way. For example, the enemy might have wire, minefields, or other obstacles to the front of his positions which can only be cleared or breached with the help of illumination. This may require blowing or breaching a path through the obstacles before the infantry can assault. Artillery and other supporting fire can be placed on the enemy to cover breaching operations. Illumination is used as needed.

e. Control of squads and platoons is much more difficult at night. Strict light and noise discipline is required.

2. **Limited Visibility Attack Control Measures**. The following control measures may be used when darkness, smoke, fog, dust and heavy rain or snow limit visibility.

a. **Assembly Area**. The assembly area is smaller and closer to the LD than for a daylight attack.

b. **Attack Position**. The attack position is always used for a night attack. It should be in defilade and should be easy to enter and exit.

c. **Line of Departure**. Same as daylight attack.

d. **Point of Departure**. A point of departure is the exact place where a unit crosses the LD. It is normally set by the company commander.

e. **Release Points**. The company commander releases control of his platoons to the platoon leaders at the platoon RP. Each platoon leader releases control of his squads to the squad leaders at the squad RP. Release points are far enough back to let units deploy before they reach the probable line of deployment. However, they are far enough forward to permit centralized control as long as possible. The platoon and squad RPs are normally beyond the LD.

f. **Route**. The company commander picks the route from the assembly area to the platoon RP. Each platoon leader picks the route from the platoon RP to the squad RP. Routes should be easy to move and navigate on. They should conceal troops from enemy night vision devices. Guides may help in the movement from RPs to the probable line of deployment.

g. **Probable Line of Deployment**. The PLD is where the company commander plans to complete deployment before moving forward with platoons on line, and squads on line. If the attack is not yet discovered at the PLD, the unit should stay silent until discovered or ordered to assault. The PLD should be on a terrain feature that is recognizable at night. It should be perpendicular to the direction of attack and as close as possible to known enemy positions on the objective without risking detection.

h. **Objectives**. The company commander assigns each platoon an objective, which should be on an easy-to-identify terrain feature. Platoon objectives should be small enough for a platoon to seize and clear in a single assault. Intermediate objectives should not be used in night attacks.

i. **Limit of Advance**. It should be easy to recognize in the dark (a stream, road, edge of woods) and far enough beyond the objective so security elements have space in which to operate. Fire support units are free to fire at targets beyond this line.

3. **Additional Control Techniques**. Other ways to ease control may include the use of:

a. Magnetic azimuth for maintaining direction.

b. Mortar or artillery rounds to orient attacking units.

c. Friendly tracer fire to help troops maintain direction.

d. Guides.

e. Reduced intervals between men and between squads.

f. A base squad or fire team on which all others in the platoon base their speed and direction.

g. Infrared or other night vision devices.

h. Identification of friendly troops by use of luminous tape or arm bands.

4. **Communications**. Wire is the main means of communications during the attack. The wire net should link the squad leaders, platoon leaders, and company commander. If possible, a security patrol should lay the wire before the attack. If not, the wire can be laid as the platoons move. You must take the following actions when laying wire and consider other means of communicating with your platoon:

a. For company net, the wire is laid from the company's assembly area to the platoon RP and from there to the squad RPs.

b. For platoon net, the wire is laid from the squad RP to each squad leader's position on the PLD.

c. Laying of wire before an attack could cause the attack to be discovered by the enemy if the wire is not properly hidden.

d. Other ways to communicate are by infrared and flashlight signals, personal contact, messengers, radios, flares, or pyrotechnics.

5. **Formations and Movement Techniques**. Formations are based on visibility, distance to the objective, and the likelihood of contact. Your platoon should not deploy on line until it is in assaulting distance of the objective.

a. The commander will decide what the company formation will be. Your platoon's formation will depend on its position in the company formation, the terrain, and the enemy situation.

b. Your platoon may cross the LD in column with squads in column (Figure 3-1), when--

(1) Visibility does not permit any other formation.

(2) Distance to the objective is great.
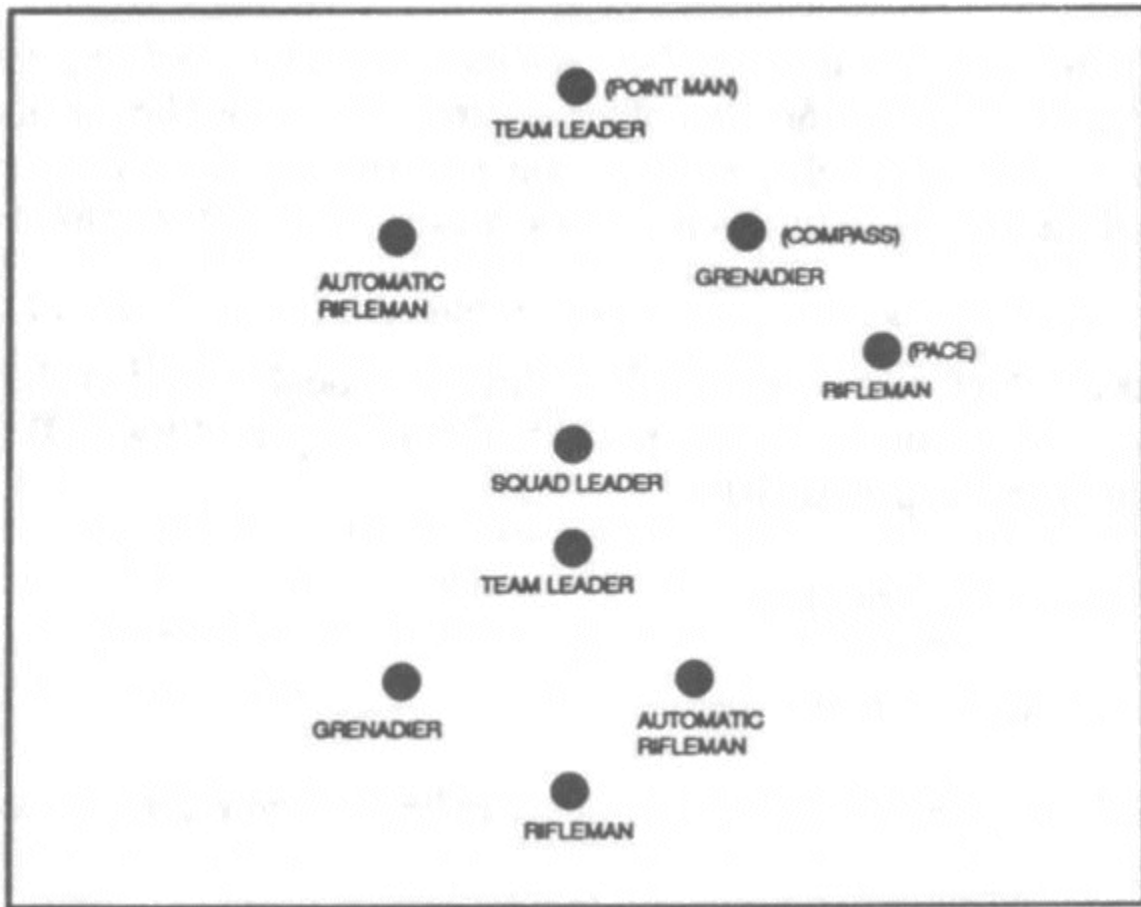
(3) Early contact with the enemy is not expected.

Figure 3-1. Squads in Column.

c. The platoon may cross the LD in a platoon line, squads in column (Figure 3-2), when--

(1) Visibility permits.

(2) Distance to the objective is short.

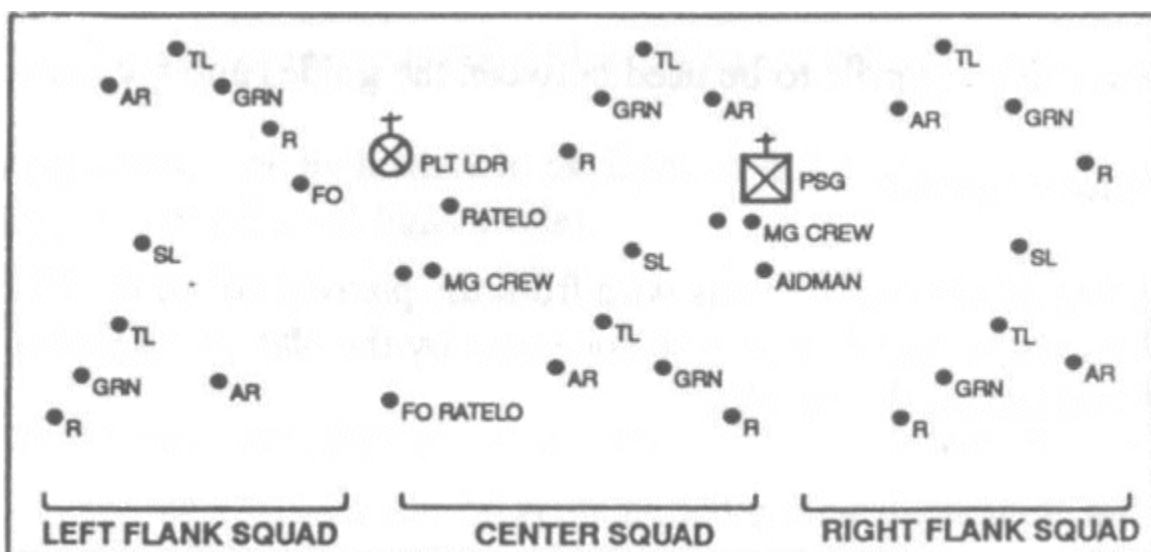(3) Early contact with the enemy is expected.

Figure 3-2. Platoon Line, Squads in Column.

d. If the company is in contact with the enemy and the distance to the objective is short, the LD is the PLD. In this case, the platoons cross the LD/PLD on line, with their squads also on line.

6. **Movement Techniques**. The distances between men, fire teams, and squads are based on the visibility, terrain, and any other factors that affect control. Since visibility is poor, platoons and squads normally move either by traveling or by traveling overwatch. Bounding overwatch is rarely used at night without the help of night vision devices. Leaders stay near the front of their units for control.

7. **Security Patrols**. Before a night attack, if there is enough time and the enemy situation permits, each platoon sends a four-to six-man patrol to secure its part of the PLD. Each patrol will also guide its platoon from the platoon RP to the PLD.

   a. The company order specifies--

   (1) Size of each platoon's patrol.

   (2) Time and place for the platoon patrols to link up and receive the company briefing.

   (3) Time of departure.

   (4) Who will be in charge of the platoon patrols.

   b. Before you send your platoon's patrol to receive the company briefing, you brief it on--

   (1) Who (from the company) will be in charge of all of the platoon patrols.

   (2) Route from the platoon RP to the PLD.

   (3) Positions of patrol members on the PLD.

   (4) Recognition signals to be used between the guides and the platoon.

   (5) Duties of guides.

(6) Laying of communications wire from the platoon RP to the PLD. (This may not always be done by the security patrol. It may be done later by the platoon. Leaders must insure that the wire is hidden if laid before the attack).

c. During the company briefing, the patrol is briefed on--

(1) The route from the LD to the platoon RP.

(2) Actions on enemy contact,

(3) Time of departure.

(4) Any other information needed by the patrols to perform their mission.

d. The patrols, under the control of the senior patrol leader, move forward to the platoon RP. They then move forward and secure their respective parts of the PLD and observe the objective, using night vision devices. The platoon guides come back to the platoon RP to guide their platoons to the squad RP and to the PLD. Each patrol leader and the rest of his patrol members stay on the PLD and help position the squads when they arrive.

8. **Supporting Fire in a Night Attack**. The platoon attacks taking its Dragon and machine guns, leaving no fire element. The company commander controls the supporting fire. If the attack is to be made by stealth, fire is planned but is delivered only on call. Fire is planned on the objective, and on its flanks and rear to isolate it during consolidation.

9. **Summary**. This completes the discussions on the doctrinal considerations for a limited visibility attack. We discussed the reasons a platoon may attack at night, whether attacks are non-illuminated or illuminated, attack control measures, communications, formations and movement techniques, security patrols and supporting fire in a night attack. We will now move to a discussion of the tactical considerations for a limited visibility attack.

Part B

TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR A LIMITED VISIBILITY ATTACK

1. **Planning for the Attack**. You will need more time to plan and coordinate for a night attack then for a daylight attack. You must keep the scheme of maneuver and fire support plan simple. Your troop-leading procedures start on receipt of the warning order.

a. After getting the company attack order, if there is enough time, you plan for--

(1) reconnaissance by leaders in daylight, at dusk, and in darkness (this gives them a chance to see the ground in different light levels).

(2) a security patrol.

(3) control measures, formations, and movement techniques from the assembly area to the objective.

(4) use of machine guns, Dragons, and fire support.

(5) action at the PLD.

(6) action when the attack is discovered.

(7) the assault.

(8) consolidation.

b. A night attack order is more detailed than a daylight attack order because more control measures and special instructions are needed.

2. **Conduct of the Attack**. The following portrayal will show you how a night attack is conducted.

a. The company moves from the assembly area, crosses the LD, and moves to the platoon RP. At the platoon RP, the platoons meet their guides and continue to their squad RPs. The platoon uses its night vision devices to help detect the enemy.

b. Once the company crosses the LD, movement to the PLD is continuous. The rate of advance is slow to maintain stealth.

c. If enemy flares burst overhead as troops are moving, the troops quickly lie down until the flares burn out.

d. If caught in the light of a ground flare, troops move out of the lighted area quickly and quietly.

e. If the attack is to be illuminated, the battalion commander or company commander will give the signal to start illumination.

f. Squads are released at the squad RP so they can be deployed before they reach the PLD. Members of the security patrols help the squad leaders position the squads on the PLD. Once their men are deployed, the squad leaders notify their platoon leader.

g. When your platoon is fully deployed, you inform the company commander. On the commander's order, platoons move forward silently from the PLD. They guide on the base platoon; the squads guide on the base squad.

h. When the attack is discovered, or on the company commander's order, the platoons assault. Scattered enemy fire must not be taken as loss of surprise and should not be cause to start the assault.

i. Once the assault is started, troops assault aggressively. They move by fire and movement using short rushes. This is done either singly, by pairs, by fire teams, or by squads. They must quickly gain fire superiority with a heavy volume of fire. Troops shout and create noise to confuse the enemy. Tracers are used to get better accuracy, to help control fire, and to scare the enemy. The FO calls for indirect fire around the objective to stop enemy reinforcement. Troops must not go beyond the limit of advance.

j. When the objective has been seized, platoons consolidate and reorganize. OPs are posted, but not beyond the limit of advance.

k. If the enemy discovers the attack before the company reaches the PLD, the company commander--

        (1) Calls for planned supporting fire to suppress the enemy.

        (2) Calls for illumination to ease control and movement.

        (3) Continues as if it were a daylight attack.

3. **Summary**. This concludes the discussions on the tactical considerations for a limited visibility attack. We covered planning for the attack, conduct of the attack, and a limited visibility attack situation and platoon order.

4. **Conclusion**. This completes lesson three. You should know the doctrinal and tactical considerations for a limited visibility attack and how to issue a platoon order for a limited visibility attack. After reviewing all the material in this lesson, you should complete the <u>practice exercise for lesson three</u>.

Lesson 3

Practice Exercise

Instructions The following items will test your understanding of the material covered in this lesson. There is only one correct answer for each item. When you have completed the exercise, check your answers with the answer key that follows. If you answer any item incorrectly, review that part of the lesson which contains the portion involved.

Situation for Questions 1through 4.

You are a platoon leader. Your platoon is preparing to conduct a limited visibility attack.

1. You are briefing your squad leaders on tactics used for an illuminated attack. You--

    ○   A. tell them the tactics are exactly the same.

    ○   B. state that the tactics are completely different.

    ○   C. state that the tactics are about the same as for a daylight attack.

    ○   D. tell them the tactics used are based on the scheme of maneuver.

2. You are discussing security patrols with your platoon sergeant before the attack. You--

    ○   A. state that if time and the enemy situation permit, the platoon will send out a four-to-six-man patrol to secure its part of the PLD.
    ○   B. tell him the platoon order specified the size of the patrol, time and place for link up, time of departure and who will be in charge of the patrol.
    ○   C. state that before the patrol leaves for the company briefing, the men must be briefed the route from the LD to the platoon RP.
    ○   D. state that platoon patrols will be under the control of the company executive officer.

3. You are briefing your squad leaders on actions they should take if scattered enemy fire is encountered as they move forward. You--

    ○   A. state that they must begin the assault immediately.

    ○   B. tell them you will call for illumination to ease control and movement.
    ○   C. state that they should begin to move their squads by fire and movement.
    ○   D. tell them scattered enemy fire should not be taken as a loss of surprise and they should not start the assault.

4. You are briefing your squad leaders on posting OPs once the objective is seized. You--

    ○ A. tell them to post OPs, but not beyond the limit of advance.
    ○ B. state that OPs should be posted where they can best control possible avenues of attack.
    ○ C. state that the company OPORD will designate locations for OPs.
    ○ D. tell them to make sure the OPs are posted well beyond the limit of advance.

Practice Exercise
Answer Key and Feedback

Situation for Questions 1through 4.

You are a platoon leader. Your platoon is preparing to conduct a limited visibility attack.

1. You are briefing your squad leaders on tactics used for an illuminated attack. You--

    A. tell them the tactics are exactly the same.

    B. state that the tactics are completely different.

    C. state that the tactics are about the same as for a daylight attack.

    D. tell them the tactics used are based on the scheme of maneuver.

2. You are discussing security patrols with your platoon sergeant before the attack. You--

    A. state that if time and the enemy situation permit, the platoon will send out a four-to-six-man patrol to secure its part of the PLD.
    B. tell him the platoon order specified the size of the patrol, time and place for link up, time of departure and who will be in charge of the patrol.
    C. state that before the patrol leaves for the company briefing, the men must be briefed the route from the LD to the platoon RP.
    D. state that platoon patrols will be under the control of the company executive officer.

3. You are briefing your squad leaders on actions they should take if scattered enemy fire is encountered as they move forward. You--

    A. state that they must begin the assault immediately.

    B. tell them you will call for illumination to ease control and movement.
    C. state that they should begin to move their squads by fire and movement.
    D. tell them scattered enemy fire should not be taken as a loss of surprise and they should not start the assault.

4. You are briefing your squad leaders on posting OPs once the objective is seized. You--

    A. tell them to post OPs, but not beyond the limit of advance.

    B. state that OPs should be posted where they can best control possible avenues of attack.
    C. state that the company OPORD will designate locations for OPs.

    D. tell them to make sure the OPs are posted well beyond the limit of advance.